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**THE GETAWAY**  
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a-wanted game of the year.

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Me ride funny.





# PSW WELCOME



## EDITORIAL

It's shaping up to be quite some battle this Christmas: *The Getaway* vs *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City*. Two superficially identical games, this pair of car and crime capers will arrive in stores at roughly the same time, yet will have followed drastically different paths to get there. On the one hand, a one-year-in-the-making surefire hit sequel to the best-selling PS2 game of all time; on the other, a three-year struggle to ambitiously bridge the gap between film and videogame. Of course, everyone wants to know which is better, but is that the right question to ask?

Having played *GTA3* to death, we all think we know what *Vice City* will offer - a few necessary improvements, a handful of new toys to play with, but essentially the same basic gameplay and structure as its predecessor. In a sense this is true, although cynics may be surprised by the extent to which

Rockstar North has polished up the same engine and stretched the formula in exciting new directions [see p46].

In stark contrast, having been tightly kept under wraps since its announcement some two years ago, *The Getaway* has remained something of an unknown quantity. However, as our exclusive feature (starting on p24) reveals, it's far from the *GTA3* clone many had previously assumed it to be. Indeed, it might eventually prove difficult to compare the results of Rockstar's sprawling, free-form criminal playground with Team Soho's tightly focused and narrative driven tale of the London underworld.

The two games offer different types of experiences. While one may more successfully accomplish its intended goal, the choice for gamers like ourselves is over which style of play we prefer. I'll leave that for you to debate on our letters page.

/ DAVID WILDGOOSE

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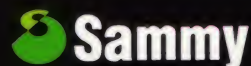
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PlayStation®2





# GLOBAL

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**PRIME MOVERS** Pit crews have been motion captured, although this lot seem a bit disinterested. But then, it is a Jag...



**TIME AT THE BAR** Enjoy Villeneuve's eccentricities while you can – the ex-champ's F1 future is in doubt.

## HOW DO YOU MAKE THE BEST EVEN BETTER?

FERRARI MANAGED IT THIS YEAR, DOMINATING THE FIELD. AND NOW SONY IS ATTEMPTING TO FOLLOW SUIT.

■ GROOVY

**CONSIDER THIS:** MICHAEL SCHUMACHER AND Ferrari are so dominant they've managed to beat an F1 game update. *Formula One 2002* is due on the shelves for the end of the season, but Schumacher's won the title already and ended it way before the 2002 versions flood the shelves – now that's fast. But this isn't just any old update, this is the

new version of the best F1 sim by miles.

Studio Liverpool has gone back to basics with even the most fundamental aspects of this racer, rather than simply pepping up the old one. The developer felt it had learned so much since the first one – and from creating *WipeOut Fusion* – that it could get far more performance from the machine by beginning again. So the level of detail has been substantially improved without

knocking the smooth speed that characterised the original – F1 fans will appreciate the boost most in the car designs, as defining aspects such as twin keel suspension and the Ferrari's heavily raked rear are clearly noticeable.

Similarly, recent changes to several tracks have been taken into account, from the massive and obvious redesign at Hockenheim to the detail changes at Spa's Bus Stop chicane. And as we're dealing with a sport (well, business...) that's more about calculated accuracy than wild-heartedness, this is surely a good thing.

Fans of the first game need not worry, however, as Studio Liverpool has chosen to maintain the overall 'feel' of the original. Improvements are everywhere, of course: the drivers are now motion captured for their out-of-car experiences, the AI is more aware of other cars (and should avoid them

more effectively) and rookies can now dial in more tyre grip if they so desire. Engine sounds, exceptionally weedy before, are now sampled from the digital TV coverage. Extreme grip and a damage bar that refills after a clean lap boosts the Arcade mode to a more hectic level, while going the other way – to full race distance on Professional setting in Simulation mode – even sees the introduction of random problems such as wing failures and suspension collapses. These are based on the individual teams' reliability records over the last 18 months, so think twice before you get into that BAR...

*Formula One 2002* is due out in October, to coincide with the season finale at Suzuka. At least it should entertain you through the testing ban until the whole thing starts again in 2003 – when Schumacher will surely romp away again as the sequels start hitting the shelves.



**SKINNY ASS** Each car is accurately modelled – check out that slinky Ferrari rear. It's all anyone's seen this season.



**GRAND PLAN** New cars, new bendy bits, new tarmac.



**IT'S THE PITS** Not the game you fool! The location!





## LOOK BACK IN ANGLES

**WHEN YOU DO SOMETHING  
HEROIC, YOU WANT TO  
RELIVE THE GLORY —  
AND THIS GAME KNOWS IT.**

// SPECTATOR MODE MAKES A WELCOME return, and it's a great way for beginners to learn the lines — just check out what the AI's doing. Studio Liverpool has also added a selection of new cameras, but how did the developer decide on the placing? Well it's been watching F1 Digital, a ridiculously expensive satellite service in the UK. So you probably won't have seen film from these cameras — Channel 9 never shows enough of the in-car stuff. And seeing as it's the most exciting angle in an increasingly depressing spectacle, F1 isn't doing itself any favours by keeping these shots hidden away from us.







EXTERMINATE  
James hated twins.

## THE NAME'S BROSNAN, THE GAME'S NIGHTFIRE

EA FINALLY SIGNS UP THE REAL BOND TO FEATURE IN ITS  
UPCOMING SPY THRILLER – **JAMES BOND 007... NIGHTFIRE.**

■ NO MOORE

AFTER YEARS OF PUTTING UP WITH A generic Mr Suave in our gaming Bondage, EA has finally gained permission to use the real thing, Pierce Brosnan. *James Bond 007... Nightfire* will bring forth a likeness of unarguably the second best Bond ever, making the whole experience even more immersive. It says here.

Although the game's release is set to coincide with the big screen opening of the *Die Another Day*, it won't actually follow the plot of the film. Instead an entirely new tale has been created for the game. Making the most of this freedom, the developer has distilled the best Bond locations (Austrian Alps, undersea Pacific, space stations...) and classic situations ripe for some 007-style OTT action. The Aston Martin Vanquish is used to provide

some respite from all the first-person shootery with more of the driving sections that worked quite well in last year's *Agent Under Fire*. Q-lab is also on hand once again to equip you with the latest technological gadgetry, and the curvy Zoe Nightshade returns as well, having clearly enjoyed her bouncy exploits in the previous game. The finished article should be ready for release this November.



LUMBAR PUNCH Shooting them in the back? How cheap.



GREEN WORLD Luckily, his camo really blends in.



BLUE WORLD Luckily, his camo still really blends in.

## A ROAD BY ANY OTHER NAME...

...WOULD LOOK THE SAME. *SHOX* DOESN'T USE THE R-WORD, BUT IT'S RALLYING NONETHELESS.

■ BOUNCY

EA SPORTS BIG IS TAKING ON RALLYING. But, as you'd expect from the brand that brought you *SSX Tricky* and *Freekstyle*

(among others), *Shox* is no Colin-esque realism jaunt. *Sega Rally* was the target – EA even installed some old arcade pods in its offices – so it's instant, accessible and over-the-top.

Cars aren't just limited to modern WRCs, either, so classics such as the Lancia Delta, 037 and Stratos, Porsche 959 and Audi Quattro await among the 24 licensed cars. Intriguingly, players gamble credits rather

than simply buying a car, and put their own cars up as collateral – what's more, they're deleted from the memory card before the race, so if you lose, it's gone... more of this kind of thing, please!

The name refers to the Shox Zones around the tracks. These are timed sections: get three golds ratings in a row and a Shox Wave (christ, that name sux) starts up. Players must pace this accelerating wave for a cash boost. 'Boss' face-offs for the best cars and a smooth 60 fps from the returned *F1 2001* physics engine add interest, but whether *Shox* can transcend its inspiration – *Sega Rally* is both classic and ancient, and both these need addressing – remains to be seen.



FLAGGING More Austin Powers than Austin Minor.



GO FASTER! You need three golds to earn extra cash.



DAY OFF Last one in the water is a rotten egg!





**CAREFUL** You could twist your ankle with that lying there.

# INEVITABALL

IT'S THE NEWS WE'VE ALL BEEN EXPECTING. **FIFA 2003** IS COMING IN 2002.

■ DEJA VU

**THAT'S THREE FIFA GAMES IN 12 MONTHS.**

And none of them managing to recapture the magic of the first few... back then we were content with anything that let us boot the ball into the onion bag with Motty bellowing in the background, but time's moved on. *PES* exists. It's taken EA Sports a while to realise that prettier visuals and gobbier commentators aren't going to tear us away from our beloved *PES*, but in recent years the developer has made a big effort to overhaul the stilted *FIFA* gameplay.

For this instalment the focus is on intelligent teamwork and more realistic ball control. Hopefully this will mean needing to take a different approach against teams employing wildly differing strategies rather than merely working out the best way to score against everybody and using it ad infinitum. The ball control has been desperately in need of an overhaul for quite some time now with the 'football on the end of a piece of elastic tied to your player's boot' feel really starting to grate. Along with the usual pristine presentation, these new changes could signal an upturn in *FIFA*'s

fortunes but it'll take something mega special (rather than just some minor aesthetic changes and the latest player updates) to really worry *PES*.



**THEY'RE RUBBISH** They can't even balance, look.



**HONESTLY** You'll be able to batter hell out of them soon.



**COVER YOUR EYES** This is a family magazine.

## VF4 AND A HALF

SUBTLE REWORKING OR MASSIVE OVERHAUL? IT'S **VIRTUA FIGHTER 4 EVOLUTION** AND IT'S COMING TO YOUR ARCADE.

■ FIST OF FAMILIARITY

**NEVER MORE THAN TWO AT A TIME** IS THE in-house motto of Sega's premiere AM2 development team, as each enhancement of the *Virtua Fighter* series since its 1992 inception has seen two characters added. *VF4 Evolution* features the odds-on certainty of – yes – a whopping two new fighters, with the western stylings of kick boxer Brad Burns and the rolls and blocks of judo specialist Goh Hinogami.

Elsewhere little seems to have changed. According to *VF4* specialists the new fighters feature a disappointingly high number of moves stolen from existing characters, while alterations elsewhere

seem similarly slight – new colours in the backgrounds, a few extra moves for the existing characters, a Quest mode where you must defeat enemies with specific moves to gain items (like a souped-up Kumite mode then), and an option entitled Scramble which no one can yet figure out at all. None of us can read Japanese. Curse the Far Eastern-led videogame development world!

This all-new (or partially new, slightly new or just marginally re-hashed) *VF4* will be appearing in arcades towards the end of the year. A PS2 version is a possibility, depending on its success. Which is why we're telling you about it now. So we can claim to be the first with the news.

## CONDUCT UNBECOMING OF A GAME CHARACTER

A FAKE LARA CROFT PRETENDS TO CONDUCT AN ORCHESTRA! STOP PRESS!

■ BOUNCE

**WE WOULDN'T WANT TO SUGGEST** IT WAS just a sad and slightly confusing episode when the beautiful Jill de Jong, the latest in a long line of Laras (now there's an image) 'conducted' the London Symphony Orchestra for the new game's soundtrack. So we'll say it outright. *Lame*. *Inexplicable*. What were they thinking?

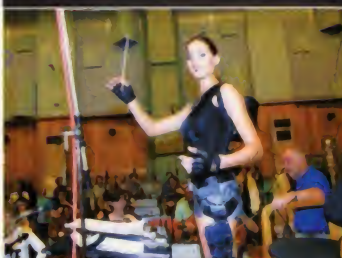
Core spent three months on the moody score, the LSO spent 82 lifetimes perfecting their skills to make it sound as ominous as possible, yet this lovely woman strides in for ten minutes – wearing some quite embarrassing gloves – and claims the credit. Here are the pictures of her doing so. If Lara Croft either a) existed, b) had any real conducting skills or c) was stark naked this would all be terribly impressive. But she a) doesn't, b) hasn't and c) isn't. So d) it isn't.



**KETTLE DRUMS** Many found it hard to concentrate.



**CONFUSED** Lara searched for one massive button.



**RAID** At last, she had the fabled Long Fag of B&H.





**HE'S WEATHERED WELL** Still looking good, but many think Sean Connery's beard doesn't do him any favours.

# PRIMED FOR ACTION?

MEET THE STAR OF **PRIMAL** — JENNIFER TATE, A MODERN GIRL WITH A SENSE OF HUMOUR AND THOSE ALL-IMPORTANT FLICKY LITTLE STRANDS OF HAIR AROUND HER FACE. AAAH.

## ■ INSTINCTS

**WE'VE DONE A NEWS STORY ON PRIMAL BEFORE. BACK IN ISSUE 2, IT WAS. AH, ISSUE 2!** So long ago! Back when we thought *Stuntman* was going to be the best game ever and the Bulldogs were going to win the grand final. How cruelly our dreams are shattered... so how has this game stood up to the test of time? Back then we said *Primal* looked good, and — hooray — we're going to say it again now, backing up our opinions with all-new images of the game in action.

The developer wanted to bring the characters to life like never before, like everyone promises but never does. To this end it has produced a whopping document outlining every minute facet of their personality, like, for example, the fact that protagonist Jennifer Tate (her there in the purple top) was the second of two babies. It's going to come with a big manual, this one.

The game begins with Jen in hospital. "Hospital doorways have become portals into Oblivion", explains the official back story, through one of which Jen is lead by her gargoyle companion, Scree. This takes you to the Nexus, where Jen is told she's some all-good kind of soul who must save everything. There beginneth the quest.

Journeying across four drastically different worlds, Jen sets out to find her missing boyfriend while coincidentally also saving everyone's arse in various demonic battles by transforming herself to suit each particular world. The developer's keen to create a game that's grounded in reality, as opposed to the usual fantasy goblins nonsense — Buffy instead of Gandalf is its planned vibe. That's a very good way to sell it. *Primal* will be out this Christmas.



**GIS A KISS** Jen can morph into worse things than that...



**GORGEOUS** Primal's undoubtedly a stunning looker.



**SMACK MY MIDSHIPPER HELL FIEND UP** Jen doesn't make friends easily... in fact, her best pal's a gargoyle.





# KILL EVERYBODY

THE MARK OF KRI EXCITES WITH IMPRESSIVE VISUALS AND INTRIGUING GAMEPLAY.

BOIL WASH

THE MARK OF KRI SHOULD BE PRETTY DEEP, CONSIDERING THE size of the weapons being wielded within it. This third-person action-stealth-melee-fighting-adventure with tribal overtones – yes, that old chestnut – concerns the hefty and rather testy Rau, a powerful warrior and trainee murderer. And instead of being weighed down with sniper rifles and rocket launchers he's got just four weapons and a flying spirit guide called Kuzo.

Birds first: Kuzo can do more than squawk "Who's a pretty boy then!" and attract sailors, as he can be used to spy on locations from high perches, collect tricky items and distract enemies, possibly by squawking "Who's a pretty boy then!" and

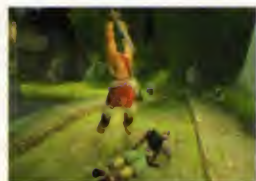
causing a stampede of sailors. Possibly not. Four weapons might not sound much, but it's what you do with the axe, bow & arrow, broadsword and spear (apparently a Taiaha, a sacred weapon in New Zealand) that really counts. Rau can target up to nine foes at a time and fight them all, even those to the side or behind him.

Sony is promising some fabulous moves, and early reports are good – the animations are many and extremely smooth, and fighting in three directions at once is always beneficial for the soul.

Despite the obvious scope for carnage, *The Mark of Kri* is described as "the thinking man's fighting game", a claim we're keen to test but quick to doubt. However, the need to use the right weapon at the right time, tactically, rather than just thrash away at everyone certainly sounds promising – and you should be finding out one way or the other in PSW come the early days of February.



STYLISH But where is everybody?



OUCH Finishing moves are brutal.



YE OLDE The world is foreboding.



## WIN!

FIVE COPIES OF THE THING-  
THE GAME AND THE FILM

COMPETITION

WE LOVE THE THING. WE LOVE THE HEAD crawler sequence ("You've gotta be fucking kidding!"). We love the sublime paranoia of the alien infection concept. We love how John Carpenter looks like a zombie. We also love Vivendi Universal's new videogame too. It's reviewed this very issue, so read all about it on p64.

To spread the love, we've managed to get our hands on five copies of *The Thing*, both the game and the film on DVD. Which means five lucky and creative readers will win one of each to play on their PS2. We'd recommend watching the film before playing the game, though. To win, simply answer the following question in the most vividly imaginative way possible:

Q. What exactly is the "thing" in *The Thing*?

Send your entry to:  
Lemme win something!  
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COLLECTOR'S EDITION



WIDESCREEN



**WE HIT THE JUNGLE DRUMS TO TALK TO ONE OF THE CREATORS OF THE FIGHTING FANTASY SERIES ABOUT ITS RETURN FROM THE LAND OF THE DEAD.**

# IAN LIVINGSTONE, I PRESUME



## WHAT TOOK THE FIGHT OUT OF THE FANTASY?

I think, like everything, people move on. The generation that was so enamoured by *Fighting Fantasy* just moved on and the people coming into it later weren't as enthusiastic because the early books, which everyone considers the best, were off the shelves. When you have a series that number up to 60 and you only see numbers 48 to 50, newcomers probably thought it was all over and so it kind of lost its impetus.

## SO WHY RESURRECT IT NOW?

Funnily enough, it's 20 years, to the day, since the first one came out. So, it's a sort of anniversary proposal, coupled with the fact that Harry Potter has got kids reading again and the last ingredient was the fantastic success of the *Lord of the Rings* movie. The publishers thought that all those factors combined to make a re-launch possible. We've launched six and there's going to be another ten coming out next year, but at the moment there are no plans to launch the whole series. We might even think of writing an original title... we're having our arms twisted at the moment.

## HOW DO YOU THINK THEY'LL GO WITH TODAY'S VIDEOGAME KIDS?

Well, that's the big question. In the 1980s when *Warlock* and *Deathtrap Dungeon* came out, there was no interactive competition, as

such. It seems to me, today, that kids have a shorter attention span because of computer games. Having said that, when we did a live demo in Edinburgh recently it was interesting to see how enthusiastic the kids were. They'd turn left and scream at the top of their voices and almost cry when their beloved

## BOTH YOU AND FF CO-CREATOR, STEVE JACKSON, HAVE DABBLED IN VIDEOGAMES.

Well, you know, times change but content doesn't... just the format. I used to be into role-playing board games, and then into books. The next

got better, processors became bigger and you could create reasonable worlds and believable worlds. Since I've been with Eidos I have had great fun trying to put my games into a new context and a new medium.

## WHAT'S THE HARDEST PART OF TRANSLATING GAME BOOKS INTO COMPUTER GAMES?

The hardest bit is to create the world, as people would have them in their head. It's only now that we can build these fantastic worlds that get close to broadcast quality TV, on your computer monitors, and you have got to make the experiences as interesting and as rewarding, as in the book. You have to compete with the imagination, which is quite difficult.

## AFTER DEATHTRAP DUNGEON, WILL WE SEE MORE FIGHTING FANTASY GAMES COMPUTERISED?

We are looking at it now. There's an online proposal for a massively multiplayer world based on the *Fighting Fantasy* world kind of thing. That's a distinct possibility and we're looking at a *Deathtrap Dungeon* follow-up but not definite plans have been made yet. There's going to be even more excitement if the games become even more popular as a result of the books, so who knows... maybe our *Fighting Fantasy* world will ride again.



character fell into a pit and got devoured by some disgusting, evil, flesh-eating goblins. Their imaginations were as ripe as ever and I think they will enjoy the experience as much as they did in the 80s.

interactive arena was always going to be computer games. So it was kind of a logical jump for me to move the stuff that I enjoyed, the content, into a new medium. That medium happened to be computer games. Graphics



# SILENT GUNNINGS

SEE THE WHITES OF THEIR EYES BEFORE YOU PUT THEM TO SLEEP IN **SILENT SCOPE 3**. GIGGLE PSYCHOTICALLY TOO.

■ WHISPERING

THE GUN GAME WITHOUT THE GUN RETURNS FOR ITS THIRD OUTING ON PS2. SNIPER RIFLES are still a bit too expensive to make bundling one with the game a viable proposition, so it's joypads locked and ready to rock once again. Well, would you pay over a hundred bucks for a plastic gun that can be used with just one game? Don't answer that.

Rather than simply port the arcade hit over to PS2, Konami has created an entirely new story mode specifically for the console. As terrorists abduct a leading cloning specialist, it's up to you to get him back before they can use his knowledge for the usual criminal master plan. We've been waiting since the Cold War for all these clever, high-tech cyber criminals to appear in the news, but it's still just the same old religious rock apes with nailbombs and knives. Maybe games should spin some new storylines closer to reality?

As an added bonus, all missions from the arcade game are included, along with multiple endings and numerous hidden options. The addition of 3D sound should help you locate your targets more swiftly – now you get to take down bad asses with nearly every sense. We eagerly await *Silent Scope 4: Scratch 'N' Sniff*... meanwhile, SS3 is out October.



**SOS** Just sink the ship. Damn the passengers.



**FREUDIAN** A chopper. A red canyon. A long pointy gun...



## TRUST NOTHING FEAR EVERYTHING



"This game is going to scare the crap out of you"  
- Gamespy

"The action is leaps and bounds ahead of anything you've seen in a Resident Evil title"  
- Game Informer (USA)

# THE THING™

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## GLOBAL INSIDER

### MECHANICALLY SEPARATED AND REFORMED CHUNKS



#### / BRAND NEW QUAKE

It's certainly an intriguing prospect, and the thought of Zettai Zetsumei Toshi remaining a Japan only title is a painful one. The game casts you as a lonely survivor of a devastating earthquake that hits a man-made island off Tokyo, and its thoughtful brand of survival horror – your foes are environmental rather than biological – has been a big hit with import gamers so far. It's not quite here yet, but Agetec's plans to publish the game renamed as *Disaster Report* in the US surely brings it another step closer. Now does anybody want to convert it to PAL for Australia now?



#### / PEACHY FLUFF

That weird looking pink thing isn't a printing error, it is, in fact, the lead character from *Fat Man and Slim*, a new platformy kinda thing from Brit developer Attention to Detail. Coming with fluffy, bouncy and metallic styles, *Fat Man* is accompanied by his skinny girlfriend *Slim* through a variety of puzzley levels, which, according to the blurb, will be fun, rewarding and addictive. Look at his little eyes, how could anyone not love the cheeky monkey? Any resemblance to Norman Cook is entirely coincidental, by the way.

#### / B-MOVIE MADNESS

*The Thing* started it – a game of a remake of an old B-movie. And now *Tremors* is working this interesting trend too: the low budget 1990 flick took a 50's-style plot and welded it to an amusing script – even the presence of Kevin Bacon couldn't drag it down. A small US desert town is terrorised by enormous worms – will the rag tag survivors beat them and escape? Will Bacon get the sexy seismologist? Yes, of course. If Rock Solid Studios' third-person adventure can capture some of the original spirit, it could be fantastic.

# YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN DEAD

NO, IT'S NOT AN LAPD TRAINING PROGRAM, IT'S FAR LESS VIOLENT THAN THAT. **BLACK & BRUISED** DOES BOXING.

## SLAPSIES

### PUNCHING PEOPLE IN THE FACE IN REAL

life is frowned upon, but Majesco aims to bring you both punching and frowning in non real-life. Clever. This cheerily cartoonish boxer promises more than 30 stunned, pained and occasionally simply embarrassed expressions, depending on where and how hard you hit your opponents. Excellent. There's more to The



PS2 POWER These are the most advanced shorts ever.



NOT MY FACE That's just not realistic. It's an outrage.

Noble Art than just rattling your opponent's softening brain until it can't work properly, you know, and searing humiliation's a big part of it – players can swipe anything from sarcastic jabs to haymakers in pursuit of this bloody humbling, as the buttons are sensitive to both pressure and speed. And every time you land a punch you'll know how successful it's been as sweat, stars, flames, lightning and even explosions number among the effects. Should his or her brain-damaged expression not give it away first, of course.

The 'toon look and over-the-top fighters (18 in all) also helps stop things degenerating into the slightly shameful spectacle of the real thing, so kids will love it. But don't worry, fight fans, there's still plenty of brutality: each boxer has a 'super punch' move, a distinct personality and, of course, wince-inducingly real damage. Hence the title. When? November.



WORLD'S POLICEMAN America even beats up girls now.



NOT MY TEETH That's just not realistic. It's an outrage!

## WIN!

### QUICKSILVER PRIZE PACKS!

## COMPETITION

WITH SUMMER LOOMING – INDEED, IT feels like it's already here to judge by the amount of bare legs and arms sighted around the office – you're no doubt fighting back the urge to abandon the PS2 in your living room and head on out into the sun. Well, fear not, Activision and Quicksilver have the perfect solution: surf from the comfort of your couch!

To mark the release of *Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer*, we've got a couple of copies of the game, two Activision 02 baseball caps, five Quicksilver backpacks, and a bunch of other stuff including a poster signed by legendary Aussie surf-god Tom Carroll.



To be in the running to win, just write your answer to the following question on the back of an envelope:

**Q. When did Tom Carroll win his back-to-back World Titles?**

Send your entry to:  
Tom not Kelly  
PSW  
78 Renwick St  
Redfern NSW 2016  
Australia







## SKATE UNTIL YOU'RE 50

HAWK SIGNS FOR ACTIVISION UNTIL WW3 STARTS. WHOOPS, THAT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE SECRET...

■ GRINDING

**WE'RE PRETTY USED TO GAMES COMPANIES** signing famous stars to give their latest title an extra bit of clout. But it works both ways – people are realising it's a powerful new way for stars to reach new audiences. Had you heard of Shaun Palmer or Ricky Carmichael before you played their PS2 titles? Probably not. And Tony Hawk's clearly no dope since, having become a household name since endorsing one of the best series of videogames ever created, he's not about to give it all up. Which is why he's signed his life away to Activision with a

whopping new 15-year agreement, effectively tying him to the company until the ripe old age of 49. That means the last game of his contract is likely to appear in 2017, and could see the ageing Hawkster grinding around bingo halls, Westfield shopping malls, and residential nursing homes. We can hardly wait.

As for the imminent fourth game in the series, it's coming along nicely, thanks. The omission of a timer leaves you to wander around the obscenely huge levels with total freedom – pedestrians around the levels are now the source of goals and challenges, such as racing against an inline skater or

pulling off a series of moves against the clock. Check out the Preview Update section (page 45) for the latest shots and details.



**REALLY YEARLY** Don't get this, wait for the 2017 update.



**DIGNITY FOR SALE** One self-respect. Not used.



**STOP IT** This man is what experts refer to as stupid.

## TENTS WAIT

MAN SPENDS 50 DAYS IN TENT WAITING FOR NEW **TUROK**. HE SHOULDN'T HAVE BOTHERED. **TIMESPLITTERS 2** IS BETTER.

■ INSANE

**SOME PEOPLE WILL DO ANYTHING FOR A** freebie, and some companies will do anything to publicise a new game. Put the two together and you have the dangerous combination of a man willing to spend 50 malodorous days inside a tent on London's Oxford Street, specifically until the release of *Turok Evolution* on PS2.

Apparently the world record (we can't believe that one even exists) for a person (or moron) willing to queue for a game stands at 30 days. Upon hearing of this attempt, Acclaim has waded in with a state of the art tent, TV and generator-

powered console to keep Jason Read entertained during his 50-day stay outside Electronics Boutique.

Acclaim UK PR manager Shaun White commented, "When we heard about Jason's attempt to get into the record books by queuing for one of our games, we felt we had to support him and sincerely hope that by providing him with some of our other games, the next 50 days will fly by."

Not if you send him *Jeremy McGrath Supercross World*. Or that *Paris-Dakar Rally* game Acclaim did last year. Good Christ no, anything but that. It's like Japanese nipple torture.

## GLOBAL NEWS

### PREFABRICATED FACTS OF MINOR NEWS NOTE



#### / POWERPUFF GIRL POWER

Bubbles, Blossom and Buttercup take on Mojo Jojo in an attempt to save Townsville. Mojo's off on one of his power-crazed mind-control vibes, accidentally summoning aliens with his radio beams in the process. Cue Powerpuff Girls! The action has you firing laser eyes off all around the city, and biffing enemies all over the pastel-shaded landscape as you battle aliens and Mojo's henchmen for possession of the minds of the citizens of Townsville. It looks alright in a cel-shading kind of way, definitely capturing the curvy, sexy and cool look of the PPGs. Out this Christmas, girl PlayStation fans.



#### / MY SKY'S MAD AT ME

*Freaky Fliers* is a new air-combat game from Midway, with a little bit of racing and more wackiness than you could shake a Timmy Mallet at, or indeed throw a broken and bleeding Timmy Mallet at. Each character has their own distinctive ship and special attack, plus a detailed backstory that will doubtless have no effect on you whatever as you fly them into the ground. It's all looking good so far, though. More soon.

#### / DON'T HOLD YOUR BREATH

PlayStation 3 was announced this month. Or perhaps... not. A detailed and almost certainly fictional report spoke of a secret PS3 unveiling to top Japanese businessmen, at which the specs – 50GB hard drive, DVD blu-ray, 512MB of system memory and, oh lordy, yes, four controller ports! – and styling – convex case, DVD slot instead of tray – were revealed, along with a *Tekken* tech demo from Namco and *Dynasty Warriors* characters from Koei. The joypads were described as 'Triple Shocks' with a third analogue stick and slots for Sony's increasingly ubiquitous Memory Sticks. Fact or fiction? We'll know... in 2006.





**THE BRIGHTSIDE** The one good thing is that WW2 would never take place.



**COME OUT, REVEREND** We just want to talk to you!

## FERROUS SHOOTER'S WAY OFF

IT'S NOT OUT UNTIL NOVEMBER, BUT WILL **IRON STORM** SPELL DISASTER FOR THE MAGNETIC HAT INDUSTRY?

### BULLETS

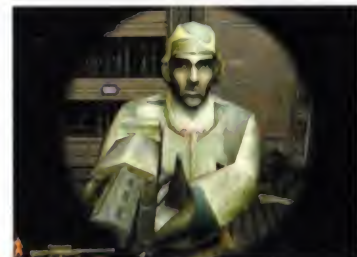
**FIRST IMPRESSIVE SCREENS FROM THIS** curious shooter – as you undoubtedly know, *Iron Storm* is set in a universe where WW1 never ended, hence the grunge and retro-tech equipment. 50 years of warfare has reduced European civilisation to a dismal wreck, though progress along military lines has continued. And you, as the weirdly-named Weasai (also known as Wiz) hold the key to ending it all. No, not by committing suicide, but by undertaking one final mission, although there's no point as mankind will only quickly start another one over something even more stupid anyway.

Okay, the character models aren't all that and early AI is poor, but 4X Studios has already extended development after greater than expected interest. The former shouldn't matter so much either, due to the ability to switch between first and third-person, so you needn't look at Wiz's weapon-laden arse if you don't want to.

Much is recognisably WWI, such as trenches (although you'll explore building interiors and towns as well) and weapons, but the twist is the integration of higher technology such as 'copters and satellite communications. Intriguingly, you'll even have access to gasses... should make two-player fun. Expect the *Iron Storm* to break in November.



**TUNNEL OF HATE** Bunkers, trenches and boltholes. Fun!



**ALTERNATIVE PAST** We could've all evolved square arms.

## RACER RUNS OFF LINE

**AUTO MODELLISTA** CONTINUES TO PRODUCE TASTY IMAGES. BUT THERE'S A NASTY STING IN THE TAILPIPE...

### ENGINES

**CAPCOM'S PRETTY CAR-TOON RACER** WILL not have online support for its PAL release. This is a shame considering it's an online title... we must now make do with split-screen alone. This obviously makes the chat room redundant, and at best reduces the parts market to a memory card novelty. Japanese gamers can go online to trade tuned bits as well as to race, which presumably helps assuage the pain of

driving 1000bhp Skylines all day, but us eager Australian players will never know the joy of beating another driver with the exhaust he just sold you because it was 'too slow'. So to speak.

The omission seems tragic, but Capcom isn't entirely to blame – Sony continues to drag its feet over online functionality here. It can hardly be included if the necessary specs aren't even set. That said, if it plays as good as it looks, *Auto Modellista* could be a hit anyway. We live in hope.



**SHADES OF TOYOTA** This must be Bugs Bunny's Supra.



**DIRTY OLD TOON** Will GT-lovers swallow such looks?



**TIMED SPLITTERS** This is all you get. No online racing for you. Not until you can learn to act responsibly.



# MICHAEL! LOOK OUT!

80s SUPERCAR KITT ARRIVES ON PS2 IN THE NEW KNIGHT RIDER GAME. LONE CRUSADERS APPLY HERE.

THE KNAME'S FAMILIAR

**DRIVING ABOUT, FLASHING SMILES AT GIRLS,** putting our feet up on the dashboard and letting the robot car do the driving while we preen in the rear-view mirror. It's the *Knight Rider* dream, baby. And it's coming soon to PS2.

The car's the ironic, I-remember-the-1980s star, with KITT containing a huge range of ridiculous gadgets to make the driving action more varied (and for extra verisimilitude, we should be given each ridiculous gadget at the start of a mission and told not to press the button 'in any circumstances'. It will then prove to be just the thing we need at the end, rather than underwater ability when we really needed a parachute). Turbo boosts, super pursuit modes, scan modes, ski modes and micro jammers are the devices at your disposal, being used over fifteen different racing tracks that house ten shiny black missions.

Here's hoping this can pull David 'I'm big in Germany' Hasselhoff back from the brink of self destruction. We'd love to say 'Michael Knight is due in April', because she was that pretty helper and that would sound rude, but instead it's due in November.



**CLIFFHANGER** The cameraman, that is, not the car.



**SUCK IT IN** Michael's extra flab didn't escape Kitt's attention.



**TIGHT SQUEEZE** Dave's flabby arse wouldn't fit any more.



**CHOPPER** There's one driving the car as well.



**GET YOUR KIT OFF** It's not Dukes of Hazzard, you know.



**MIRACLE CURE** Did Hasselhoff ever look this young?

## WIN!

TEN FIGHTING  
FANTASY NOVELS

COMPETITION



If you're as old as us, you'll probably remember these books from the mid 80s. If not, here's your chance to discover them for the first time. *Fighting Fantasy* creators Steve Jackson and Ian Livingstone nicked the "turn to page 295" formula of the *Choose Your Own Adventure* series, added a nifty dice-rolling combat system, and proceeded to churn out over 50 tales in which "YOU are the hero", as the tag line went. The *Fighting Fantasy* series' influence on videogames should not be underestimated. They were interactive games in the most literal sense, while both authors now work in the industry (Livingstone heads up *Tomb Raider* publisher Eidos, while Jackson earns his keep at Brit developer Lionhead). Now, some 15 years later, Allen & Unwin is re-issuing four of the first *Fighting Fantasy* books, including the original *Warlock of Firetop Mountain* and the legendary *Deathtrap Dungeon*. And we've got ten copies of *Warlock of Firetop Mountain* to give away if you can answer the following question on the back of an envelope. Correct and/or imaginative answers will put you in the running to win.

Q. What type of dice do you need to play a *Fighting Fantasy* book?

Send your entry to  
Turn to page 295  
PSW  
78 Renwick St  
Redfern NSW 2016  
Australia



# Otaku Alley

## WHAT'S HAPPENING IN JAPAN?

Welcome to the weirder side of PlayStation gaming. Otaku Alley is devoted to keeping you up to date on all the Japanese gaming goodness that's fit to print. Here you'll find news and previews on all the best games, soundtracks, figurines and other assorted goodies to come out of the great Land of the Rising Sun. If it's Japanese and PlayStation related, you'll find it here – and if you don't, drop us a line at [psw@next.com.au](mailto:psw@next.com.au) and tell us what we're missing out on. /DANIEL STAINES



**MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE** Robots disguised as postmodern installation art.



**MECHA PRON** Big bots + short-skirted girls = Japanese gamer's wet dream.



## Gigantic Drive

- TYPE: Mech Action
- PUBLISHER: Enix
- CHANCE OF LOCAL RELEASE

45%

■ The clamouring of Robotech fan legions notwithstanding, mech action games are ordinarily quite unpopular here in the West and generally don't see release outside of sunny Japanese shores. Not so with *Gigantic Drive*. Developed by Enix, this robot action-

adventure title is currently penned in for a US release later this year (under the equally silly name *Robot Alchemic Drive*) and, if sales go reasonably well, may well grace Aussie PS2s with its unique brand of big stompy bot fun soon after. This is a good thing and worth

getting excited about because *Gigantic Drive* actually looks really enjoyable. Confirmed features for the game include a huge variety of multi-form mechs, an in-depth R&D system that allows for an unprecedented level of personal customisation and – best of

all – fully dynamic environments that can be destroyed and employed as the player sees fit. The idea of breaking up a skyscraper and using it to bash the crap out of giant robots fills our cold, bitter hearts with a pure joy we haven't felt since the release of *Rampage*.



**BLACK HAT** Alternate dimension or not, this guy is so obviously evil.



**SHORT SKIRTS** The survival horror staple.



**TITLE SCREEN** Says it all, really.



## clock tower 3

- GENRE: Survival Horror
- PUBLISHER: Capcom
- CHANCE OF LOCAL RELEASE

60%

■ Given the current popularity of the survival horror genre, there's a pretty good chance that we'll be lucky enough to see *Clock Tower 3* on PAL television sets sometime next year. We're not making any kind of promise obviously, but one simply has to take cursory

glance at Capcom's Victorian themed thriller to see that it's definitely something worth a local release. The game centres upon a young student named Alyssa and her attempts to escape an ethereal dimension into which she has mysteriously fallen. According to

Capcom's Japanese website, this dimension has been created by 'time and memories' and is chock full of 'horrible ghosts and evil spirits'. What that basically means, we think, is that it's set in some kind of alternate past where Alyssa must

solve several Jack-the-Ripper style homicides and rectify the wrongs of history before she can return to her normal Japanese student life of playing *Dance Dance Revolution* and avoiding lecherous demon tentacles. We'll keep you posted of any local release news.





**THE HILLS ARE ALIVE** With the sound of political machinations and backstabbing.



**SETTING SUN** The perfect environment to contemplate the next round of wheeling and dealing.



**TITLE SCREEN** Says it all, really. In Japanese.



**STAT-TASTIC!** Combat or opinion polls?

## nobunaga's Ambition online

● GENRE: MMORPG  
● PUBLISHER: Koei  
● CHANCE OF LOCAL RELEASE

10%

Games like this make you wish Australian telcos would get off of their collective arse and establish an extended broadband network in this country. *Nobunaga's Ambition Online* is a MMORPG based on a popular series of strategy games and looks like a bit of hot competition for Square's now dominant

*Final Fantasy XI*. Instead of going for the tried and tested route of developing an online version of a traditional Japanese RPG, Koei is aiming for an intriguing mix of roleplaying, political capering and military strategy. When the game launches this year, the world of Nobunaga will be very loosely defined in a

political and social sense, with the plan being that players will themselves fashion societal structures through their actions in the game. Players will be able to establish and maintain large guilds or armies with which to exert influence over Nobunaga's political institutions. Very ambitious, indeed.



**WHAT WOULD FREUD SAY?** Nothing. He's been dead for decades. Ha ha ha.



**RESIDENT DRIVEL** So bad it's good.



**TENTACLE PRON** It'd be good for something.

## combat queen

● GENRE: Peek-A-Boo Action  
● PUBLISHER: Taito  
● CHANCE OF LOCAL RELEASE

0.5%

This one's strictly for those of you who like to, as the saying goes, 'cop an eyeful' while playing the PS2. What we've got here, basically, is a game that lets you ogle attractive Japanese actresses as a reward for putting up with really crap gameplay. Now, usually, Otaku Alley will only report on those games that have some kind of worth outside of the usual Japanese kookiness. Not this time – *Combat*

*Queen* is just too stupid to pass up on. Look at the screenshots, for god's sake – there's a garishly dressed woman shooting a very fake looking laser gun at a giant purple phallus monster. Who can honestly say that isn't worth noticing? For those of you who are anxious to know what the game actually plays like, it's apparently some kind action-adventure thingy where you control an elite military squad

consisting of disturbingly attractive android women. Gameplay alternates between 'movie shooting' and '3D shooting' – which is bad game jargon for 'crap *Time Crisis* segment' and 'crap *Tomb Raider* segment'. All reports suggest that the whole thing is utterly dire, but just take a look at those screenshots once again. Almost makes you wish games like this were released here just so we could laugh at 'em, doesn't it?

### RESIDENT SNIVEL

Shinji Mikami, producer of Capcom's criminally overrated *Resident Evil* games, has gone on national Japanese radio and blasted two of the gaming industry's biggest players: Sony and Squaresoft. According to our sources in Japan, Mikami criticised Sony for making cheap consoles and inferred that the PS2 is selling well simply because people are forced to constantly purchase replacements. As if that wasn't enough, he then called buyers of Square's Disney RPG, *Kingdom Hearts*, "foolish" and further proclaimed that the game did not deserve to sell nearly as well as his own *Resident Evil* remake for the GameCube. He then apologised rather pathetically and asked Square to "please forgive" him. Huh. It's a bit sad really, isn't it?

### FFXI SPECIAL BOX ART PART II

Aside from the fabulous special edition soundtrack we mentioned a few issues ago, Square has revealed that more goodies are on the way in a bid to boost flagging sales of *Final Fantasy XI*. Of interest to any collectors out there is a snazzy limited edition of the game itself, which will come in a big ol' box beautifully decorated by Square's resident Master Artist, Yoshitaka Amano. On top of that, punters will also get four handmade flags from kingdoms featured in the game and some other stuff that hasn't really been clarified yet. The estimated going price is 8,000 yen and it's in strictly short supply, so expect to have to pay though the nose if you want one.

### XENOMANGA ON THE WAY

In something of a surprise, Namco announced recently that they would be producing two mangas based on their now successful *Xenosaga* game. The first will apparently be a serious title featuring an in-depth history of the Xeno universe, while the other is supposed to be more light-hearted and will essentially be a comical look at *Xenosaga*'s main characters. None of these books are going to be found in local comic shops, so you'd best find a good importer and a spare hundred bucks or so to spend.



# Dialogue



WANTED: YOUR OPINION ON ANY TOPIC SOMEHOW RELATED TO VIDEOGAMING ON THE PS2. THANKS.



**HORSING AROUND** Is this PSW's next cover star?

## / THREATENING BODILY VIOLENCE

I thought I would write this short letter just to let you know that, as a result of reading your magazine, I finally took the plunge and bought myself a nice shiny PS2. I had gone without for too long. It was time to boldly go where I had never gone before (mainly due to my other half threatening bodily violence if I even thought about spending another \$500 on a console!)

Anyway, I happened to drop by the local newsagent on the way home from work one day, and came across PSW#2. The first thing that struck me about PSW was the price. I have been a keen gamer for many years now (I use to be almost obsessed with getting my monthly copy of Zzap! 64 as soon as it arrived at the newsagent - that mag was the greatest), and I am used to seeing many of the UK and US magazines priced around the \$15 mark, however I couldn't believe the only Australian mag under \$10 was PSW. I guess what I'm trying to say in a really roundabout way is that I will continue to read PSW because it seems more interested in giving its readers value for money instead of putting out an over-priced publication that anyone who doesn't actually earn money for a living couldn't afford. (I work full-time but I even balked at spending \$15 on a magazine - imagine how a 14-15 year old who might get \$10/week pocket money feels about forking out that much on one mag). Anyways, cheers for listening to my rambling.

Jared Davies  
via email

**Thanks Jared, that made us feel all warm and fuzzy inside. Big ups comin' your way.**

## / THOSE GRILLS ARE LOWER

I've been collecting your mag since PSW#1 and I think you have done an impressive job so far. It's people like you who bring us the latest info in the world of PS2. Now, a couple of questions:

1. Will PSW get bigger once the PS2's Internet is up and running?
2. How long until developers cease production of PSone games?
3. In pictures of the PS2, the iLink port is on the bottom right to the USB ports, and those grills next to those ports are about 1cm above the surface of whatever you're putting your PS2 on, but my PS2's iLink port is top right to the USB port and those grills are lower and wider?

Thanks for your time, and good luck with the mag  
PS2 Elder810  
via email

## To answer your queries:

1. Um. We're not convinced there's any causal connection between the two events, but rest assured we'll approach this situation with an open mind.
2. Certainly not for the foreseeable future. PSone games still hold a bigger market share than the Xbox and Gamecube combined.
3. Welcome to the Twilight Zone.

## / I PLEAD TO COMPANIES

As I play PSW DVD#3 and look at the game line-up, I see what gaming has come to. Each idea has been used and rehashed over and over again. Watching the amusing *Ratchet & Clank* collecting bolts, I see a carbon copy of *Jak & Daxter*, only to then watch *Sly Cooper* collecting coins in exactly the same manner. There is little originality in the gaming industry anymore, and when a new idea comes along, à la cel-shading, a shed-load of games use that technique. How much more can we take?

With films, a new idea comes along and movies have been going three times as long as gaming! What the games industry needs are original titles, new features, and gimmicks that are put into practice, unlike Geo-Mod. So, I plead to companies, think up your own ideas! Or the games industry will

be plagued with more god-awful titles!

Chris Sinnott  
Liverpool NSW

Here are some ideas for free: A 3D fighting game set in an office where throwing different items does different degrees of damage (stapler - five hit points, photocopier - 20 hit points, but drains some of your energy due to the stress of lifting it). Being A Dolphin, where you're just a dolphin and swim about for a bit. Mp3 Hunt, a challenge to find files before they're deleted. Sim Woolworths. In fact, the more we think about the more we like the idea of collecting coins.

## / ALL FIT AS A FIDDLE

Dear sir/madam, I am very happy to write you this letter. I hope by the grace of the almighty god that you are all fit as a fiddle. This is my first time of writing to you so I will describe myself. My name is Daniel Ocansey and I am a boy of 13 years of age who is very much interested watching or reading magazines and playing games but I don't have any. I will be very happy if you send me some or anything you will like to give me. I will like to end here and hope to hear from you soon. My best regards to all and sundry and I hope my request will be granted. Bye for now. Yours ever,  
Daniel Ocansey  
via email

Much happy is PSW thinking your direction. Sadly free gifts are not happen, the printing of letter only prize complimentary we have to be offering to you. Postal fees to you very expensive. We will thank you for your letter, and offer many encouragements and good will for your future developing in life by God.

## / PANTY SNIFFER'S WORLD



**NUTS AND BOLTS** Collecting coins is becoming a bit of bore.



## MISCELLANEOUS CUTS

### SHORT CUTS

I don't see how anyone can like Final Fantasy games. When Final Fantasy VII came out on Platform I bought it - and hated it. It was so boring. There's no way I'm buying Final Fantasy X. XI or XII.  
Stuart Gelder  
via email

My name is Daniel Ocansey and I am a boy of 13 years of age who is very much interested watching or reading magazines and playing games but I don't have any. I will be very happy if you send me some or anything you will like to give me. I will like to end here and hope to hear from you soon. My best regards to all and sundry and I hope my request will be granted. Bye for now. Yours ever,  
Daniel Ocansey  
via email

I am sick to death of PS2 mags, disown Mike Tyson Heavyweight Boxing. The game plays like a dream and the animation looks great. One more thing, I don't see Anthony Mundine with his own title!  
Shaun Williams  
via email

My name is Daniel Ocansey and I am a boy of 13 years of age who is very much interested watching or reading magazines and playing games but I don't have any. I will be very happy if you send me some or anything you will like to give me. I will like to end here and hope to hear from you soon. My best regards to all and sundry and I hope my request will be granted. Bye for now. Yours ever,  
Daniel Ocansey  
via email



SEND YOUR THOUGHTS TO:  
Dialogue  
PSW  
78 Renwick St,  
Redfern NSW 2016.  
psw@next.com.au



I'd just like to say cheers for making #3 of your fine mag look like a porn publication. Now the previously amicable newsagent I visit gives me strange looks. I bought the mag to read on a train journey – once on my way I whipped out *PSW* to be greeted by several upturned noses from fellow travellers. I reckon the favoured interpretation for your initials was Panty Sniffer's World. Still, the mag and DVD content were spot on so I won't hold it against y'all. Perhaps next month's cover could feature a lady-boy doing the dirty with a Shetland Pony?

Chris Chadwick  
 Carlingford NSW

That image shouldn't be difficult to find. A brief browse of Jackson's internet history folder should turn up something suitable. Anyway, stay tuned for more in-depth coverage of WWE's prized assets next issue.

## / OUT ON A LIMB

Last month, instead of buying Warhammer magazines with my pocket money like I usually do, I decided to go out on a limb and purchase a copy of your magazine, *PSW* #3, instead and find out if there were any new games out. The last game that I bought was *Escape from Monkey Island* (which is great, and I have completed it twice!), even though there were no orcs in it. I was disappointed to see your magazine contained no orcs either, but I still read some of it.

Wesley Smith  
 via email

Good news, Wesley. Issue 4 of *PSW* contained approximately 19 orcs within the *Lord of the Rings* feature, notwithstanding the fact that we don't really know what orcs are and therefore find it a bit hard to accurately identify and count them. With two *LoTR* games coming this year, we are confident



MORTAL KOMBAT A pointless pic of a pointless game to illustrate a pointless letter. We do try!

your orc-news requirements will be satisfied.

## / TURBO BIN LORRY RACING

What is the point of *Circus Maximus* when there are much better racing games like *Gran Turismo 3*? Who will buy a game about chariot racing? What next, Turbo Bin Lorry Racing where you have to go through a city collecting as much rubbish as possible in a certain time or Extreme Supermarket Trolley Stunts, where you push a trolley around with someone inside it up ramps and doing some sort of stunt. Sorry I got a bit carried away but you see my point.

Tom Smith  
 via email

Strangely enough, "What is the point?" has become something of an internal *PSW* motto, usually accompanied by a loud sigh and a cup of coffee

being thrown at a wall.

But we do concede your point about *Circus Maximus*.

## / TAKEN THE LIBERTY

I don't have an opinion on anything game related but I wanted to write to you. So I have taken the liberty of making up quotes for your Short Cuts section. Enjoy!

I'm a big fan of rain, I never miss a drop... You're too happy. You're like Santa, on Prozac!... and then the house collapsed. But it was okay, Eddie McGuire was inside... Was *Mortal Kombat 2* a sequel? [Other tedious ones provided but removed – Ed.]

James Palmer  
 via email

Let this serve as a warning to other readers. Don't follow James' example.

## AUSTRALIA'S MOST WANTED

Drooling in anticipation? Wetting yourself with excitement? Hyperventilating with anxiety? If so, and if such undignified behaviour is solely due to waiting for a PS2 game (rather than, say, that cute girl at the bus stop), then we'd like to know about it.

Email us: [cpaw@next.com.au](mailto:cpaw@next.com.au) and tell us which five upcoming PS2 games you desperately want to play. Each month, we'll tabulate your votes into a Top Ten list right here in this panel. Include your full name and address so we can award a prize (i.e. a game plucked from the Editor's desk) to one voter to be drawn at random. So get voting!

To get you started, here's a list we devised earlier from a straw poll round the office:

1. Grand Theft Auto: Vice City
2. Tony Hawk Pro Skater 4
3. Auto Modellista
4. The Last
5. Pro Evolution Soccer 2
6. Sly Cooper
7. Silent Hill 3
8. Robocop
9. Sega Soccer Slam
10. Anna Kournikova & Extreme Nude Tennis



MONKEY MAGIC So good, reader Wesley finished it twice!



GRAN TURISMO 3 Leaves games like *Circus Maximus* redundant, according to Tom Smith.



SERIOUS SIM Who'd rather race in supermarket trolleys?





# “MENTION GTA3 AGAIN. GO ON, I DARE YA”

THE GETAWAY IS COMING ALONG QUITE NICELY, THANK YOU VERY MUCH, SIR. IT'S VIOLENT, IT'S RUDE, IT'S NASTY, AND MOST SHOCKINGLY OF ALL, IT'S VERY, VERY, VERY NEARLY FINISHED. WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR IT FOR YEARS, AND NOW WE'VE BEEN PLAYING IT FOR HOURS. FANS OF SWEARING REJOICE - YOUR GAME HAS ARRIVED. /GARY CUTLACK





SOME KINDA DOUBLE-YOKER?  
See that cigar? Motion captured.  
Not sure about the smoke.

GRAND THEFT AUTO 3, GRAND THEFT AUTO 3, GRAND THEFT AUTO 3. YOU'D THINK IT WAS THE FIRST VIDEOGAME EVER INVENTED SUCH IS THE WAY EVERYONE GOES ON ABOUT IT ALL THE TIME. FEATURES ABOUT THE GETAWAY NOW SPEND MORE TIME EULOGISING ON HOW GREAT GTA3 IS, RATHER THAN TALKING-UP THIS NEW AND POTENTIALLY WORLD-BEATING CREATION. WE'LL TRY NOT TO GO ON ABOUT GTA3 TOO MUCH. WE WANT THE GETAWAY TO BE GOOD IN ITS OWN RIGHT. IT'S LIKE ONE OF OUR CHILDREN. WE'VE WATCHED IT DEVELOP OVER THE YEARS, WE'VE WORRIED ABOUT IT, WE'VE LAUGHED BOTH AT IT AND WITH IT, AND NOW, MORE THAN ANYTHING, WE WANT IT TO SUCCEED AND MAKE US PROUD. PLEASE, GOD, IF YOU'RE NOT TOO BUSY, MAKE THE GETAWAY GOOD FOR ALL OUR SAKES. AFTER ALL THIS TIME WE'RE NOT SURE WE COULD HANDLE DISAPPOINTMENT.

#### SO THIS IS IT

Us, a PS2, a copy of *The Getaway*. It's like waking up at 3:30am on Christmas Day and finding a bearded intruder emerging from the chimney with a sack of presents – it really exists! It starts with a violent story, one that introduces Mark, the man you play for the majority of the game. Cue the first cut-scene, and cue swearing the likes of which we've never encountered before in a videogame.

Kids will need to play this with the volume down to stop mum hearing it from the kitchen and taking it away, as *The Getaway* features proper swear language. The F-word appears regularly, as do other words which we are allowed to print in their entirety. Such as bollocks. Other language abounds, creating an open-mouthed sense of shock – this kind of language isn't supposed to be coming from a PS2! A good argument for the introduction of a restricted 18+ classification, perhaps? We think so.

#### IN A WEST END TOWN IN A DEAD END WORLD

Level one starts with a car chase, your first introduction to *The Getaway's* London. It's an

exceedingly busy London, the busiest city a game has ever managed. Tired of town racers that only come with two other cars, as if you're racing about a metropolis that's been evacuated due to a suspected terrorist attack? Not so here. There are cars, taxis, buses and dirty old Vauxhall Astra estates everywhere. Traffic amounts vary according to the time of day, but just about every time you enter the snaky Soho, back streets you're confronted by traffic jams. Not just one or two cars, but ten or so, jamming entire roads and leading to you either

#### GETAWAY FACT #01

50 PEOPLE ARE LOOKING AT MENU SCREENS ALL DAY IN AN AIR CONDITIONED OFFICE IN CENTRAL LONDON. THERE ARE ANOTHER SIX WEEKS OR SO TO GO UNTIL THE GAME HAS TO BE FINISHED. THERE ARE ALSO SLEEPING BAGS IN THE OFFICE. THEY'RE WORKING QUITE HARD.





**SHAT IT, YOU SLAAG** Lots of story-telling scenes, but they look and sound well good.



doing the humane thing and seeking out alternative routes, or doing the evil thing and mounting the pavement to plough through the pedestrian chaff that lines the city roads. It's an incredibly busy city that cannot fail to impress.

People leap out of your way as you mount walkways, often jumping onto the road and to their death in their efforts to escape you. Now, it's never funny to laugh at death, but here, in this one specific case, it is. Either you kill them or they kill themselves. Either way, you will see dead people. And yes, it is possible to steal the buses for momentous moments of carnage. The pedestrians also come in handy when things get out of control with regards local policing. Surrounded? Car blown up? Then grab a pedestrian to use as a human shield. Some particularly nasty cases will shoot at you regardless, but usually having a living person as an impromptu bullet-proof jacket ceases the barrage and buys you a little more time.

It's here that you notice how good the motion capture animation is. Okay, so the main guy has a bit of a funny run that for reasons we can't explain just doesn't look right, but elsewhere it's all slick and smooth, with the blokes and enemies coming with a vast array of nice-looking, effortlessly changing movements.

The car damage models are good too, with breakable glass often resulting in your windows falling out, and driving sections may be made a lot tougher by you smashing your car up and breaking the indicators (more exciting indicator news to come). Crash the thing too badly and it starts smoking – no surprise there, but if you stay in it for too long there's a chance your man will emerge from

## GETAWAY FACT #02

THE GETAWAY'S PRODUCER BRENDAN MCNAMARA LET SLIP (PERHAPS ON PURPOSE, PERHAPS ACCIDENTALLY, WE'LL NEVER KNOW) THAT A FOLLOW-UP IS ALREADY PLANNED FOR NEXT YEAR. AFTER ALL, YOU CAN'T LET THIS MUCH GROUNDWORK GO TO WASTE, EH?

the wreckage on fire, then burn to death in the street. Another good justification for an 18+ rating there. Anyway, back to the beginning of the game.

The opening scene shows the main character (let's call him Mark Hammond, seeing as it's his name) catching sight of his wife getting shot and his child getting kidnapped. A few 'F-this, F-that, F-everyone else's F-ing mother and the F-ing horse she rode in on' lines of dialogue later and you're into the first mission – that chase through London, which is you trying to catch and apprehend (well, kill) the 'nappers. This first chase sees you taking in all of the above traffic and pedestrian play, ending with you arriving at a warehouse location. Now the second movie clips kicks in, outlining your motivation for playing through the next section. The game then follows this exact same structure throughout, with level bit, story bit, level bit and story bit creating an experience that should present one flowing, film-like story from start to finish. That's the aim, anyway, and the main reason why comparisons with the random events of *GTA3* are utterly pointless.



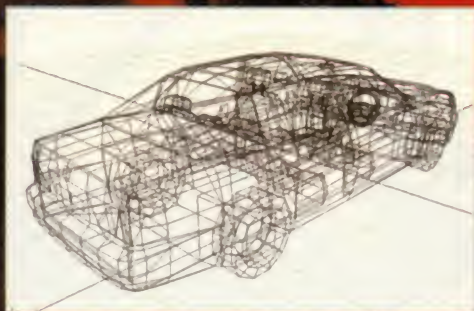


### GETAWAY FACT #03

THE LONDON METRO POLICE WERE INVOLVED IN THE PRODUCTION OF THE GAME, AND WERE SURPRISINGLY KEEN TO HELP. THERE ARE MANY DIFFERENT KINDS OF COPS, EVEN BEAT-POUNGING FOOT BOBBIES TO GIVE CHASE WHEN YOU MOW DOWN PEDESTRIANS.

THE AVENGERS Some of the levels have you working in tandem with another character.





## GETAWAY FACT #04

THE GETAWAY USES BOTH ANALOGUE STICKS TO CONTROL THE CARS - LEFT IS STEERING, WHILE PUSHING FORWARDS AND BACKWARDS ON THE RIGHT STICK ACTS AS YOUR ACCELERATOR AND BRAKE. OR YOU CAN USE THE BUTTONS IF THAT'S TOO HIGH CONCEPT.

## EAST END BOYS AND WEST END GIRLS

Normally we hate cut-scenes. There's nothing less exciting than getting home with your new game and spending an hour sitting through a selection of badly acted, cliché-packed and comprehensively dull introductory stories. *The Getaway* is different. The story clips set up each level with you taking control exactly where the plot ends, so you'll be needing to pay attention. It's essential to watch them, and get this - what we've seen of them so far has been a bunch of genuinely enjoyable, violent and amusing stories that we actually want to watch for entertainment purposes, rather than just hammering Start to skip through 'em and get to the actual action. There's swearing, blood, comedy, all presented in the recognisable Guy Ritchie, cocker-nee, rub-a-dub, Jamie Oliver, apples & pears, shooters 'n kettles traditional London style. Guv'ner.

Everything has been motion captured, lip-synched and beautified, resulting in a huge collection (34 in total) of great looking and sounding mini-movies. Many are over three minutes long (the last one is an epic nine minute feature length presentation!), but they're so interesting to watch you never feel the need to discover which controller button the manual refers to as 'Skip'. Viewing them, however, is not compulsory, so once you've seen 'em once it's possible to get straight back to the beginning of a failed mission and try again.

If you fancy exploring London your best bet is to pick a non time-sensitive mission and just go off on one, as each time you enter the game world you're tied to a specific mission and goal. It'll still be possible to drive across the entire city in one go should you be so subversive, a feat that in itself will take quite a few hours if you decide to explore every street and side road. A few of the smaller streets and alleyways have been sacrificed, but Nintendo fans will still be able to stop and pepper bullets into Sony's accurately



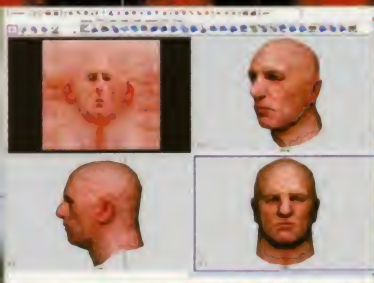
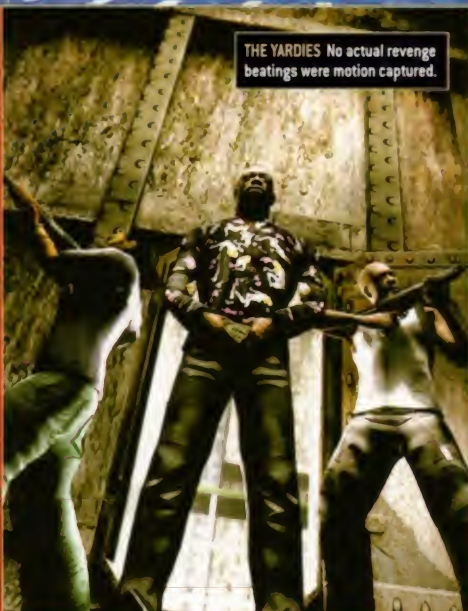
created Great Marlborough Street offices. Not that they'd be seen dead playing this, of course.

## THE OTHER LEVELS WE'VE SEEN

Most exciting interior bit we've seen is the escape from a police station, where you fight side-by-side with another vigilante (a female, too) and make mince meat out of the cops that want to keep you arrested. Both of you must stay alive - if she dies it's mission failed. We were shown around an art gallery that comes with plenty of people just

## GETAWAY FACT #05

THE AMERICAN DEMO VERSION OF THE GAME HAD ALL ITS SWEARING BEEPED OUT. OVER HERE, WE GET THE FULL BEEP-FREE SWEARY VERSION. MEANWHILE, THE GETAWAY HAS ALREADY BEEN SIGNED FOR A JAPANESE RELEASE - A VERY RARE THING FOR A WESTERN-DEVELOPED CONSOLE GAME.





standing there looking at the pictures, until you naturally decide to pull out a gun – which is when the screaming starts.

The second level begins with another swearsy cut-scene, this time with the gang boss demanding you torch a trendy Soho bar. He's got your kid hostage, so you'd better do it, and no funny business either. Drive there, blast your way up the stairs, then set the place afire and battle enemies through the haze of a smoking room. Job done.

## GETAWAY FACT #06

**A LOT OF THE SMALLER CHARACTERS WITHIN THE GETAWAY ARE MEMBERS OF THE GAME'S DEVELOPMENT TEAM. SO IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE GAME, YOU CAN SHOW THEM EXACTLY WHAT YOU THINK.**

We watched a level designer walk through a derelict building, pointing out where stairs are going to collapse, where bad guys are going to shoot you through walls and where holes in the floor are going to open up. The floor hole is used when playing as the cop. You have back up officers helping you who run ahead, then die when the floor gives way, nicely leaving you to play on alone as videogames require. It's all looking rather good.

That said, for a game so close to its cut-off date for completion in time for the Christmas cash-raking period, there was an alarmingly large amount of sections still being worked on and looking unstarted, let alone unfinished. Perhaps that's indicative of the size of the project, or perhaps it's just us trying to look for holes and problems that aren't really there.

### LOOK AT HIS FACE! LOOK AT HIS FACE!

See the screenshots? Does it look like anything's missing? See how there are no on-screen dials, gauges or indicators anywhere? That's on purpose, that is, that's for boosting the atmosphere and keeping you involved, keeping you intensely staring at the screen for visual clues. If you want to know how healthy your character is you have to look at him, see how he's walking; if he's looking a little emotional you need to let him lean up against a wall for an energy-recharging rest. You're often given clues as to your next move as well, with the car chase offering the best example – your car's indicators blink to let you know which way to turn next. No gaudy yellow arrows spoiling the atmosphere in *The Getaway*.

Moving indoors is a surprisingly smooth process, with the game not needing to load between each new opened door or entered building. Well done technical people at Team Soho; (now why can't other developers of lesser games incorporate this?). The plan is for the whole thing to seamlessly stream together as one, creating a coherent world unspoiled by the atmosphere-destroying effects of the 'Loading, please wait' screen. Should you wish (and of course you will) it'll be possible to drive across all of the city and visit all of its locations inside and out without interruption or break.

### YOU THINK YOU'RE MAD, TOO UNSTABLE

Weaponry isn't a particularly important part of *The Getaway*. You have what you're given and you're thankful for it. Pistols are your default, while shotguns and machine guns pop up when dropped by an enemy. Run over a weapon and you pick it up and start using it. There's no inventory screen here, neither is there any ammo to find – when the gun's empty it's binned and you go back to the pistols. Simple.

Targeting is slightly more confusing at first, until you realise how the game helps you to get things right. The stealth element is straightforward enough, simply requiring you to press X when near a hiding hole. Thankfully, the 'lock on' area is big, so there's no need to painstakingly manipulate yourself into position first. Press X anywhere near a wall and the man backs himself up to it and prepares for a fight. Again, simple.

Your view tells you what you're able to shoot in this back-to-the-wall stealthy mode. If the camera adjusts its angle to show the enemy, you're on target for an easy shot, if it doesn't the subject is too far away or off-centre. A shoulder button locks onto a target if you're in a hurry, but there's also a manual aim option for those popular 'head shots' the kids love so much and for taking random pot shots at the scenery to see what blows up. Like, for example, the fire extinguishers, which spurt out gas that's ideal for putting yourself out should you foolishly manage to set yourself alight. Elsewhere are exploding barrels for mashing up surrounding enemies, and a whole host of other explorable and combustible extras.

We find it slightly odd that the button layout does not mimic that of *Grand Theft Auto 3*'s. Triangle – surely the game world's default button for getting out of and into cars by now – has been replaced here by circle, while *The Getaway* also insists you use square to shoot instead of *GTA3*'s X. Perhaps the UN could get to work on useful things like standardising videogame control systems instead of such petty matters as human rights or weapons inspections. No matter, you get used to it after a while.

The control of the car is another thing many have griped about, the specific complaint being that it's not identical to the control in *GTA3*. *The Getaway* is more sensitive, requires gentler handling of the steering, and penalises you harder for making mistakes. Scenery gets in the way too, with lamp posts refusing to fall over should you ram into them. So you need to be more careful, you need to think about your route, and you must steer around objects rather than just career through them. It's not bad, it's not difficult, it's just different to *GTA3* and requires, ooh, about half an hour of practice to get the hang of. So get over it.

### WELL I DON'T LIKE THAT FOR A START

There are two things the team expect people to complain about. Thing number one is the no-doubt already written accusations of the game being too linear. Well, linear when compared to *Grand Theft Auto 3*, of course. Each level comes with one objective, and that's your lot. This isn't a messing about killing time kind of game, it's a doing stuff and achieving objectives in the correct order kind of thing. Which, as many people seem to have forgotten, is how videogames have always been since the dawn of time.

The second potential negative point is more serious. Sensitive readers may wish to skip to the next paragraph. The game includes a scene featuring a kitten in a bag that's being used as a distraction. At time of writing it is undecided whether said bagged kitty will live or die. We would suggest it should appear to die at the time, but perhaps surprisingly reappear later on in the game to take a bullet for the hero, thus saving the day and taking on a legendary status within *The Getaway*'s mythos. But, this being a nation of animal lovers, the bad publicity generated by one dead or even slightly wounded cat would dwarf the fact that it's possible to run down several hundred human beings in five minutes of play, so... the cat may live. We don't really care – we're all dog people here.



## GETAWAY FACT #07

**IT HAS THE VIOLENCE AND SWEARING, AND IT ALSO HAS A BIT OF NUDITY. THE STRIP CLUB FEATURES NEARLY NUDE DANCING GIRLS, PLUS THERE'S A BROTHEL WITH APPARENTLY AUTHENTIC SEX SOUNDS TOO. WE ASKED IF THEY WERE THE TEAM AT IT – THE ANSWER WAS EVASIVE. SO WE SUSPECT THEY PROBABLY ARE.**





## GETAWAY FACT #08

THERE WILL BE AROUND 60 CARS IN THE GAME. THE BEST ONE WE'VE SEEN SO FAR IS THE COOL NEW MINI. IT'S SO SWEET. THE ORIGINAL TOYOTA MR2 HANDLES WELL, BUT EXPLODES AFTER ONE SIZABLE CRASH.

REALISTIC SKIN These men are based on actual real men. Their hair is like men's hair.



SAFE, NOT SORRY We refuse to make jokes about Yardies.



WE HAVE A SITUATION Do what he says and no one gets hurt. We don't want any heroes. Stay calm.



TORCH IT Yeah, well, mess with fire and you burn.





## GETAWAY FACT #09

THOSE MOVIE CLIPS WHICH LINK EACH LEVEL... THERE'S OVER AN HOUR OF THEM IN TOTAL, AND THE FINAL ONE IS A STAGGERING NINE MINUTES LONG. TWO TO THREE MINUTES IS THE AVERAGE. THEY ALL USE THE IN-GAME GRAPHICS, AND LOOK RATHER SPUNKY.

SO TOTALLY BUSTED We only asked him if his head went up to the top of his helmet.



JAM SANDWICH You can't sue them for harassment.



TAKING THE RISE Pay review meetings - always tense.

## CUT-OUT-AND-SEND LETTER OF COMPLAINT!

OUTRAGED PARENTS! SAVE TIME BY USING PSW'S PRE-WRITTEN LETTER OF HORROR AND DISGUST AT THE GETAWAY'S USE OF SWEARING AND VIOLENCE.

Dear Sony,  
I would like to complain about the violence / swearing / nudity\* contained within PlayStation2 game *The Getaway*.

I caught my son / daughter playing this sickening / horrifying / repulsive game in his / her bedroom and was staggered / stunned / struck dumb by the sheer amount of nasty violence / filthy language / shocking themes that I witnessed.

I was deeply offended / extremely shocked / utterly mortified that you see fit to include such adult content in a videogame, and hereby demand that you refund me / burn in hell for daring to release such an item into the hands of children.

Yes, I am aware it has an MA15+ rating, but I chose to ignore that because I didn't realise game ratings actually meant anything.

Yours sincerely / in disgust / without prejudice

Mrs / Ms / Miss / Father / Reverend

\*Delete as appropriate

## COMING, READY OR NOT

So, our opinions? Is it going to 'beat' *GTA3*? Will it be the best thing ever? Or is it going to be the biggest let-down in gaming history? With all the negative thoughts and the undercurrent of opinion from some quarters that seems to want *The Getaway* to fail, we went there demoralised and expecting to see a jerky, unresponsive, unfinished mess. We saw no such thing! Instead, *The Getaway* looks good, appears to have summarised London perfectly, and seems to be living up to its promise of presenting a flowing, movie-like experience. It didn't appear particularly jerky, the detail levels were superb, and the whole thing looks as cool in real life as it does in the screenshots. We think people are going to like it, we really do.

And, incredibly, it's very nearly finished, we'll be reviewing it very soon (maybe even next issue) and you'll be able to walk into a shop and actually see it available for sale. In a proper box and everything. The chapter of our lives entitled 'Waiting For *The Getaway*' is about to come to an end. We're excited, sad, worried and eager all at the same time. Everyone is dying to find out if the finished article will live up to the epic expectations, everyone wants to have an opinion on *The Getaway*. Like it or not, this game is going to be huge. It simply cannot fail. Can it?

PSW



## GETAWAY FACT #10

SOME NUMBERS FOR YOU: 40 SQUARE KILOMETRES OF LONDON (THAT'S 24.85 SQUARE MILES FOR ALL YOU IMPERIAL MEASURERS AND OLD PEOPLE), 20 INTERIOR LOCATIONS AND A CAST OF 22 MAIN CHARACTERS.





# "AK AK AK AK AK AK AK AK AK... BOOM"



WEAK THE PACE. You can tell by looking at it how loud it is. Sort of.



COULDN'T ASPIRE. One man, two aims, two guns, massive damage.



## GUNGRAVE

A MAN WITH A GUN AND A GRAVESTONE EMBARKS UPON A SEXY TECHNICOLOR ADVENTURE OF DEATH. THOSE JAPANESE, EH?

TYPE	SHOOTING
PUBLISHER	ACTIVISION
GAME GLANCE	
/ Shoot this	
/ Shoot that	
/ Oh, just shoot everything	

IT'S A BIT NOISY. IF PLAYSTATION2 development systems have volume knobs, this one has been twisted up to about 17. You don't want anyone playing it in the room while you're trying to have a polite conversation about the weather, that's for sure, as its relentless "ak-ak-ak-ak" of gunfire will drown out pretty much every polite observation about how the inclemency of this time of year. The game may have background music, but if there is,

you just can't spot it behind the mayhem and extreme noise terror.

There is a reason for it. Noisy old *Gungrave* here encourages the linking of your shots, with that little counter there in the top-right corner of the screen racking up how many continuous hits you land. Decent scores fill up that round little gauge in the left, a gauge which once filled gives you access to one devastating special attack. And so the "ak-ak-aking" continues afresh.

You're not just limited to shooting enemies, either. This blasting chain combo thing requires the use of scenery as well, filling those tiresome gaps between shooting bad guys by letting you pulverise... just about everything else to keep the combo up. Cars are a good target, going through three or four different stages of deconstruction before they finally explode. Walls can often be destroyed, pipes can have holes blasted in them, and benches, bins and vending machines lurk in

PSW PROPHECY
<b>BEST BECAUSE</b>
a surprising selection of graphics and cut-scenes a reliably high level of fire-power and damage
<b>WORST BECAUSE</b>
it's connected the whole game on two first-gen "Sublime" (Dante's) "Amazingful" (Rui) quite



DEFAULT SCENERY Red containers signify that this is... a game.



SHOOT-DO-MUCH-BLAST-FIRE! A special weapon. Going right off.



WOO! YEAAA! Cool diving-sideways moves for Hong Kong film fans.





corners to be pumped with fire, all keeping your shooting multiplier going. Everything must blow. In *Gungrave*, there is really no excuse or reason to stop firing.

#### COFFIN DODGING

And boy, does it all look incredibly nice. Is it cel-shading? Is it art? Or is it just the impeccably designed hand-drawn locations and characters that give *Gungrave* its impressively unique look? The levels themselves house a massive amount of variation, with each shiny room being left smoking, torn apart and riddled with holes once your business has been conducted within them. Train carriages disintegrate before your eyes, rocket fire fills the entire screen with yellow burning on occasions, and if you ever dare to stop moving or shooting for a moment then you'll die. It's a good, simple, old fashioned shoot 'em up.



50% BANG THEORY The barrels explode. Everything explodes.

See that thing on his back? That's the hero's coffin. It also doubles as a rocket launcher and a stabbing/clubbing weapon. Don't ask about the coffin thing, it's all in Japanese. We'd only be guessing at a reason ourselves. Triangle is your special coffin-shoot-attack button, one that houses four different rockety blasts of destruction. Square button is your standard shoot trigger – it may soon wear out. L1 locks on to any enemies that require more than the usual amount of pummeling, while X is your jump button – use this in conjunction with a direction to perform a left/right/backwards/forwards jump-while-shooting move, just like in films. That's it. Simple, eh?

Fire a rocket into a packed area and watch those bad guys fly. Then walk past and enjoy the damage you've caused, count the bullet holes in the walls and make a mental note to congratulate the developer on how much of the scenery can be



FOUR BLANKS Lots of enemies, but they're all useless with a gun.

## THE CRAZY ANIME STYLINGS OF ...

GUNGRAVE. IT LOOKS PARTICULARLY COOL IN A CRAZY JAPANESE KIND OF WAY.

DO YOU LIKE ALL THAT MANGA AND anime stuff? Have you recently started pretending to like it to make yourself look cooler than you actually are? Do you want to like it, but find the plots and characters laughable

and shallow? Whatever the motivations for the anime/Manga fan, *Gungrave* looks ace. Here's a selection of some of the best shots taken from the various movies and cutscenes. Cool, eh?



damaged, should you ever meet any of the programming superstars behind this shooter.

Your four special weapons are, in order of effectiveness; the Hellhound Roar, the Death Blow, the Bullet Dance and the Raging Inferno, each of which is earned by completing a level. There's a life-up option too, trading one of your special attacks for a boost of your health.

The more astute of you should have just calculated that four specials unlocked at the end of each level equals four levels. It's a disappointing turn out for any game, especially one that may be gunned through as quickly as *Gungrave*. The game's already out in Japan, and in late-breaking news we can reveal it's been signed up by Activision to come out over here. It may get a slugging from some due to its shortness, but we'll give it at least a seven. We like this kind of thing.

/ GARY COTLACK

#### FIRST OPINIONS

PSW

Good looking, loud, dirty and extremely easy. There's a cheap and tawdry woman analogy in there somewhere, but we're frankly too embarrassed to trot it out. Put in a less sexist manner – we like *Gungrave*. It's cool. It's fun. It's simple. We probably wouldn't pay \$100 of our own money for it, but as a way to spend an afternoon it's a damn site more of a laugh than most games. And thankfully, it's now even got a local publisher ensuring a future release.



# "SEXY, BMXEY"



COMEDY ELEMENT The bystanders provide most of the humour.



DAVE'S EYE VIEW The levels definitely seem larger to us.



YOU'RE FIRED He wants you to grind on his hose.



INFLATED This is what I'll be like when the surgeon's finished.



BALANCING ACT Grinding is much easier than in Mat Hoffman.

## BMX XXX

ADULT-ORIENTED BMX GAME FEATURING SWEARING, LADIES AND – WARNING! – AMERICAN ATTEMPTS AT HUMOUR.

TYPE BMX-ING

PUBLISHER ACCLAIM

GAME GLANCE

/ Realistic hair  
/ 12 levels  
/ Not Mat Hoffman

SEE IT ON DVD

/ The usual mad medley  
/ Bikes, tricks, dudes  
/ And of course Mat Hoffman  
/ Et... we mean Dave Mirra

### AND THIS IS DIFFERENT TO MAT

Hoffman... how? On the surface of it you could swap this with the game reviewed on pp64-65 of PSW#4 and only the bikers, their families and the game's relevant development teams would know. Sadly we cannot fill two pages of the magazine with speculation based upon how two games 'look quite similar', and have the 'the same kind of names' or 'have both got bikes in'. That kind of laziness earns verbal warnings. So we must play them both and think about clever ways of differentiating between the two. Here goes...

First impressions of *BMX XXX* (formerly *Dave Mirra XXX*)? It doesn't look quite as sexy as Mat Hoffman's bike game, but then this isn't finished and that one is. It plays well though, and hey kids, that's what matters, right? Grinding and balancing are both

extremely easy, gameplay is fast. The promised 2000 tricks seem straightforward and instinctive to perform, the upgradable bikes look and feel great, the 50+ real-name sponsors give it a suitably skater look. Everything you need, really.

Levels are varied, so much so that they bear little relation to anything you encounter in reality. Officially there are eight bizarre levels, but our special version with everything unlocked for us (ha!) reveals ten. Simple mathematics says that there are therefore two levels which will be kept secret for you to discover and unlock yourself.

So we won't tell you what they are. The first eight contain three skate parks, one version of Monaco, a huge outdoor construction/factory site set at a dam, and a level called 'Launch Pad' that has you breaching NASA security by grinding near rocket engines. It's a good mix.

### PSW PROPHECY

#### BEST BECAUSE

- ▲ Saucy subtext, some video clips of ladies
- ▲ Smooth tricks, big levels, overall cool look

#### WORST BECAUSE

- ▼ We're bound to say it's not as good as *Tony Hawk*
- ▼ We'll probably get moralistic about the porn

So far our favourite is the Mullaly skate park with its car-packed city, central park and hidden rooftop grindy holes. Dunno why, it just is. Perhaps it's because this is where we discovered the staggeringly politically wrong peep show bonus section (see panel). We don't like Monaco very much, even though it has a realistically broken down Jaguar F1 car on one of the road sections (no, you can't ride round the whole circuit, only a harbour-side fraction). And those secret levels? They're not programmed in yet, otherwise we would've told you all about them. We're rubbish at keeping secrets.

### FROM ONE EXTREME TO ANOTHER

"Interacting with hot chicks" is one of many gems taken from the official *BMX XXX* press release, which goes on to seriously suggest in a non-ironic American way that this is "the most outrageous and humorous action sports game ever, as scripted by some of Hollywood's top comedic



## DO YOU WANNA SEE MORE?

### COLLECT COINS TO SEE GIRLS!

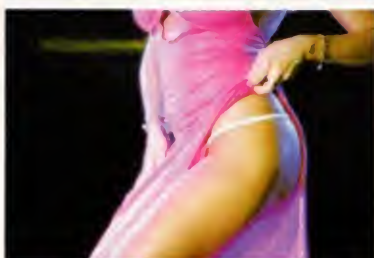
THE MULLALLY DOWNTOWN AREA HAS A SEEDY strip club where you can swap the coins you collect for time in a viewing booth. It's not really XXX, more certificate 15, and, as far as we could tell, no T or indeed A was displayed. To see the first movie here cost us two coins. We went back again with nine coins and got to see her flash her G-string in a new movie. With 17 coins we saw the cleavage scene, which, to be fair, was quite arousing. Finally, with 30 coins the game crashed – oh, the pain of bug-ridden preview versions...



WHAT DO POINTS MAKE? Slightly provocative video clips!



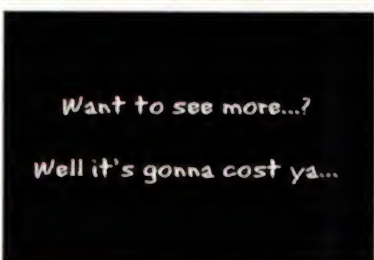
PINK BITS This is what you get for two coins. Not much.



BIT OF LEG For a bit more cash you get to see this area.



PULL THE UDDER ONE Now we're getting somewhere.



SPOKE TOO SOON We tried, it crashed. Life just ISN'T FAIR.



TONGUE TWISTER Basic tricks only deserve basic names.



GRAVITY DEFYING The lengths we go to to glimpse a bit of panties.

writers". The game's spiel also boasts "All-new female riders, each with realistic physics for their hair, body and clothes", although for all the talk of triple-X content, we are yet to encounter anything in the game more risqué than a pair of slightly wobbling breasts and a G-string poking out of the jeans of female rider Mika. You can see stuff like that in any suburban shopping mall if you just hang around and watch girls walk past. Apparently the tasks you'll have to undertake will try the limits of decent taste. This part of the game hasn't been fully implemented yet but rumours of having to actually kill your rivals in outrageous fashion should make the review very interesting.

#### WHO'S A PRETTY POLY?

Apparently there are now twice as many polygons in the game as there were in the previous *Dave Mirra*, and as we have no legitimate way of counting them we have no option but to believe it and present that claim as fact. However, the game looks very similar to the first one to us, although perhaps it's now possible to see more of the level snaking off into the distance. Sadly the 'create-a-rider' feature isn't working, so you'll have to wait until the review to see how big you can make the girls' chests. Believe us, we'll be going for the maximum possible.

And no extreme sporter is complete without some musical accompaniment. *BMX XXX* currently

has The Hives (a good thing, by our reckoning), and lots of the kind of shouty guitar noise you are pleased exists but would generally not want to listen to. So that's a bit of mixed bag, then.

But what's it like to play? Initially frustrating, due to the higher turning circle requirements needed to properly steer a bike. But after spending an hour or so with imaginary stabilisers on and adapting your *Tony Hawk* skills to fit, it becomes as natural as rolling a pretend bike around a TV screen can ever be. Triangle is the international language of grinding, and remains so in *BMX XXX*, with the rest of the controls suitably close to *Tony*'s norm to not cause alarm or distress to those easily confused and upset by change. It's just like all the others in the genre, which should naturally mean it's just as good as them all, yes?

/ GARY CUTLACK

#### FIRST OPINIONS

PSW

It won't keep us awake at night, but we do have a quandary here. Do we mark it down because it's the same as all the other BMX games, or mark it up because it does exactly what these kinda things are supposed to? We've got a couple of months to mull that little dilemma over before the review. In the meantime we offer you this sneak review preview – *BMX XXX* seems... really rather good.



# "IT REALLY IS THE BEAUTIFUL GAME"



HE SHOOTS, HE SCORES: The enhanced replays let you examine your skills from every angle.



ETA  
DECEMBER  
2002

POUL, REF! That's a push, surely?



VERSIMILITUDE: The player likenesses are a vast improvement.



NO CHEATING: Unlike TIS, PES2 doesn't let you dive for a foul.



BACK PASS: Totti prepares to stroke it gently between Vieri's legs.

## PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 2

NOW IF ONLY KONAMI WOULD EMPLOY LES AND JOHNNY AS COMMENTATORS.

TYPE SPORTS

PUBLISHER KONAMI

GAME GLANCE

/ Extra variety to the play, thanks to more ricochets and half-clearances  
/ Tweaked gameplay  
/ Improved camera system  
/ Revamped Master League mode to add depth

### THE ARRIVAL OF THE FIRST PRO

*Evolution Soccer* in this country was a rather low-key affair. It seemed as if only a handful of copies made it through customs – and possibly for good reason, as those lucky few owners got to enjoy a truly mind-altering experience.

Never before had there been a more realistic, challenging, rewarding football game, as critics universally applauded Konami Tokyo's footballing masterpiece. As you can imagine, we are pretty excited about the sequel, *Pro Evolution Soccer 2*, which is due for release down here in November. You should be too.

The original *Pro Evolution Soccer* was an updated version for PAL markets of the Japanese release *Winning Eleven 5*. Similarly, *PES2* is based on *Winning Eleven 6*, which has sold more than a million copies since its release in Japan in April. It is therefore no surprise that the version we were lucky enough to play looks fairly polished. There were still some aspects of the game to be fixed, such as some player names and certain quirky bugs, but the version was wonderfully playable. You can be confident

that by November, we'll all receive a beautifully refined, feature-laden masterpiece.

It's worth pointing out now that *PES2* is not a major step up from the original. The preview code we played was certainly an improvement, but the game retains a very similar feel. The actual play seems a little more varied, with more half-clearances and unpredictable deflections, but most of the changes are minor ones.

The most obvious and perhaps confronting change is that if the analogue stick is in a neutral position, no longer will the player with the ball simply stop. Instead he will dribble

slowly forward. The R2 run is also slightly modified, having been made more flexible, but also less powerful and effective.

Through balls seem to have less 'lead' on them, making them more effective in tighter situations. Also very evident is

improved collisions between the players, which is particularly seen during fouls, and with new jostling animations. The number of animations on the whole has been bumped up significantly, making it a much more diverse spectacle.

While throws and corners are almost identical to how they were in *PES* (apart from the now flapping 3D corner flag – hurrah!), free kicks have a slightly different feel. Nonetheless, we were still able to perform very well in the special free kick training, suggesting the formula remains the same.

Yes, there are some fantastic training modes that test you on particularly skills of the game. Good performance is rewarded with a prize – exactly what we don't yet know. The free-kick test has you having shots from around the box with a wall in front of you. Instead of the goalie in the goal however, a large target 'hangs' on the goal line. You get awarded points on how close you can get to the bullseye. Basic, yet brilliant.

Graphically, the game is definitely richer than its predecessor, with crisp players and kits, lush pitches and slightly more detailed stadiums. The crowd seems to be slightly more dynamic, while

### PSW PROPHECY

#### BEST BECAUSE

- ▲ The great football game just got even better
- ▲ It's competitors are still stuck in the 2nd division

#### WORST BECAUSE

- ▼ Has it undergone enough enhancements?
- ▼ The presentation doesn't compare to FIFA et al



# FANTASY FOOTBALL

*Pro Evolution Soccer 2* will feature forty club teams as well as more than fifty international sides. However, Konami haven't got the rights to use some of the players, so several international sides, such as Brazil, are filled with players with fictional names. Even more disappointing is the fact that all the club teams have obscure names such as Europort instead of Liverpool. Sure, it's relatively easy to work out what the teams and players are supposed to be, and if you're desperate you can edit all the names, but it's certainly an area where FIFA overshadows the PES series.



ROBERTO WHO? Cafu's fake name offers a suitable insult.



there are some nice reflections of advertising boards in puddles in rainy matches and of the understated sun on the pitch. There's still no ref or linesman on the pitch though, nor are there players in the dugouts.

The match camera can (if you desire) now swivel slightly left and right as the ball goes up either end. It might not sound like much, but it definitely increases the dramatic spectacle. Whereas in *PES* we found it hard to play in anything but Wide view, *PES2*'s smarter camera system meant we actually ended up using one of the new TV-style cameras.

The sense of the occasion is also aided by improved crowd noises and commentary. There are considerably more chants, and a greater range in volume of the crowd. While the commentary still suffers from all the typical problems with videogame commentary, it is nonetheless a massive improvement over the

original (*But that's not saying much - Ed*).

Unfortunately, the game still doesn't offer non-goal replays, while there will remain players in the game, as well as all the club teams, with fake names. At least the editing system has been given an overhaul, and now even features a dinky little kit editor to toy with.

The Master League has also been given a revamp, gaining an extra tier and a cup competition. It is now possible to loan players, and overall the management has become far more complicated, with wages and (dis)interested players making it harder to create a Real Madrid.

*PES2* is destined to be a screamer when it is released in November. Although not a huge advancement on *PES*, at this stage it appears to be one not to miss, if only for the epic four bar Europop masterpiece that accompanies each goal.

/ JACKSON GOTHE-SNAPE



## FIRST OPINIONS

PSW

It might have more teams, more modes, better sound and better graphics, but, most importantly, *PES2* is just as fun - wait, no - more fun to play than the original. Cross out that Biker Mice from Mars action figure - this baby owns the top spot on Santa wishlist.



# "DIRT HAS NEVER LOOKED SO BEAUTIFUL"



SKIDPAN Every stage felt like ice last time. Let's hope it's just restricted to Sweden in the sequel.

ETA  
DECEMBER  
2002



WET 'N' WILD Window smearing water is a brand new feature.



VA-VA YIKO! Mitsubishi sound truly terrifying.



FACE OFF The drivers all look like their real world versions.



GLEAM MACHINE It won't be clean for long in all that muck.

## WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP 2 EXTREME

THE ORIGINAL HAD THE STYLE, CAN THE SEQUEL OFFER SUBSTANCE?

TYPE	RACING
PUBLISHER	SONY
GAME GLANCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All 14 rounds of the World Rally Championship</li> <li>155 stages with 800km of asphalt, gravel and snow</li> <li>6 single-player modes</li> <li>5 multiplayer modes</li> <li>Over 50 official drivers and co-drivers</li> </ul>
SEE IT ON DVD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Well, let us see now</li> <li>Probably some cars</li> <li>Maybe some roads</li> <li>And hopefully some trees</li> </ul>

**THERE WAS NO DOUBT ABOUT IT,** *World Rally Championship* was one seriously gorgeous game. Only the seminal *Gran Turismo 3* had better looking cars, the panoramic vistas were so jaw-dropping you had to play with your head in a muzzle, and the damage inflicted upon your machine could be seen in a spectacular panel-deforming fashion. It was so beautiful you desperately wanted to believe that it was something you could happily settle down with, perhaps buy a lovely four-bedroom cottage in the Blue Mountains, and when the time was right bring a few little Ford Fiestas into the world. But then reality set in. Stunning looks can't mask inherent failings for long; just ask my numerous ex-es for proof of this. Although, in *WRC*'s case it wasn't that it was shallower than a beginner's swimming class full of supermodels, it was the handling that slammed it into reverse before it had even left the start line.

With no other cars to race against, it's just you and a few hundred miles of the world's worst terrain for company, so it's understandable that rally games live or die by their handling. *Sega Rally* started the slippery trend with cars that positively refused to point in a straight line, before *Colin McRae* perfected the art of doing it sideways to become the benchmark title that everyone else aspired to. Then *WRC* came along with a game that

was uncontrollable at times. One over-zealous stab of the analogue stick led to you weaving from one side of the road to the other as you unintentionally over-compensated with each vain attempt to right your car. This time rallying should be very different.

Evolution Studios (the team behind the game) admit that there's a five-year plan behind the *WRC* games. It wants to make each one better than the last, and better than the competition, by perfecting everything that was wrong with its previous effort. With *WRC2*, that means a total overhaul of the dodgy handling. The aim is to get something that feels like you're rallying without actually needing to spend 20 years honing your skills as messrs Burns, Mäkinen and McRae undoubtedly have. It's a fine blend of arcade swerviness and the need to grapple with your pad in a satisfying, rather than frustrating, fashion that seems to have eluded everyone so far on PS2.

### THE COMPETITION

*V-Rally 3* was good but took a considerable amount of patience and learning before you felt you could throw your machine into the corners with any degree of confidence. *Rally Championship* was just too arcadey to really develop any sort of serious

PSW PROPHECY
<b>BEST BECAUSE</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An authentic and detailed "real" rally game</li> <li>No rally game has yet lived up to the potential</li> </ul>
<b>WORST BECAUSE</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>With the revamped handling, it's playable</li> <li>There's plenty of other rally games on the market</li> </ul>



# TO DIE FOR

WRC2'S PANORAMIC VISTAS WOULD MAKE CONSTABLE GO WEAK AT THE KNEES.

THE ORIGINAL WRC WAS RENOWNED FOR having the longest viewing distances of any driving game. Whenever the road briefly straightened out you could literally see for miles up ahead. Now the developer

has extended the horizon to over five kilometres. If you see a mountain in the distance it's not just a pretty background, you're going to be scaling it (or probably falling off it) in a few minutes.

Unlike other games that basically cut out a very thin path of trees and scenery to run alongside the road, WRC's surrounding environments are tangibly real. Mountain passes rise up and through

the terrain before plummeting down the other side. It makes every bend a terrifying prospect. Overcook a turn and you'll be flying through the air to a mangled heap thousands of metres below.



TWISTER A long and winding road.



FAST AND FURIOUS Dense forests need lighting up.



RAGGED EDGE Cliffs have a genuine sense of scale.



HIGH PLAINS DRIFTER The horizon is miles away.



SPARK OUT Lose your tyres and you'll have to crawl back to service.



LUSH Replays are still the best way to admire the scenery.



LEMMINGS No word yet on whether they'll wander out in front of you.

devotion to. While our first play of *Colin McRae 3* didn't exactly blow us away as we had expected and as the previous two games had done in the past, so the door is still wide open for WRC2 to clamber its way onto the top step of the podium.

What we can be certain of is that Evolution's new offering will be the most authentically comprehensive rally title on the PS2. Every single driver from this year's World Championship has been faithfully recreated, although we'd prefer to look out for the trees, boulders and career-ending cliff side plummets up ahead than their accurately modelled mugs. All 14 rounds of the Championship are also featured, including the new ADAC German Rally, and each event will now follow the exact same schedule as the real thing. The first day is set aside for setting up and fine-tuning the car with the following three days adhering to the servicing/racing/repairs format, with penalties incurred for any time limit infringement.

The actual stages not only look utterly beddable with some of the most impressive scenic views this side of a millionaire's holiday brochure, they're also remarkably detailed. The 800km of road is the most authentic track surface ever featured in a game, with bumps, ruts and truck swallowing potholes making every inch of tarmac, mud, ice and sand a totally unique and constantly fraught challenge. Of course this also means that it's now even easier to lose control of your machine. Penalties for slamming your \$1million racecar into a tree are now much more diverse, with a brand new damage model able to show components breaking off, tyres shredding, and all manner of other bodywork destruction.

## WEATHERING FRIGHTS

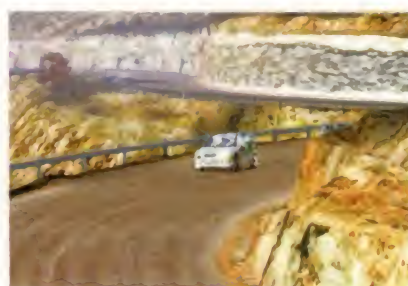
As if all of that wasn't enough of a challenge there's also a full spectrum of weather to contend with. WRC2's remarkable ability to show miles into the

distance isn't of much use when rain, sleet and snow are blotting out everything but your bonnet. Even when it's relatively clement there's still the dust kicking up huge plumes of blinding smog, mud chucking up stones, and the game's new water effects making each exploding puddle a radiator-busting moment of unpredictable panic.

/ MIKEY FOLEY



SMACK MY 206 UP The damage model is even more detailed.



HAIRY PIN Lose it here and it's a long, long way down.

## FIRST OPINIONS

PSW

With no rally title yet capable of really nailing it properly on PS2, there's still an inviting gap up the inside for WRC2 to squeeze through and make a challenge for the top spot. All the original game needed was better handling to make a gorgeous looking but still somewhat disappointing game the complete package. Now that the team behind the game is working to rectify that one fatal flaw we've got high hopes for this potential dirt master.



# PREVIEW UPDATE

WE'VE PREVIEWED THEM ALREADY, BUT THEY'RE STILL NOT FINISHED. HERE'S A QUICK UPDATE...

## BURNOUT 2: POINT OF IMPACT

IT'S POLICE CAMERA ACTION WITHOUT THE POLICE.

FOR MOST OF US, OWNING A SPORTS CAR is a lifelong dream that will probably never be fulfilled. Even if you do get your hands on a nippy little two seater your sights are just gonna move on to the next even nippier littler two seater. But think about it for a sec. If you did acquire yourself that Porsche 911 Carrera 4 Turbo, how long would you be able to hold onto your licence? Lose control of the 450bhp beneath that featherweight fibreglass body of your TVR Tuscan and it'll take a lot more than a panel beater to fix your totally destroyed bodywork. And getting behind the wheel of a classic Ferrari F40 might seem like a dream come true, but after scraping together every last penny just to get the car, can you afford the 50

grand for a new rear bumper when you forget about that streetlight at Video Ezy?

Stacking your beloved wheels into the back of a bus is both heartbreaking and leg breaking. Stacking them into the back of a truck, two buses, three cars and a people carrier, before rolling three times and flipping into the air to land on your mangled roof is even worse. So let *Burnout 2* take the strain and save yourself all that physical and financial grief – you'd be bankrupt within 30 seconds if you had to pay for the damage you can cause here.

*Burnout 2* will change your life. No longer will you hate your Corolla for being such a pedestrian embarrassment. You'll thank the Lord that its engine refuses to go above 60. Who knows what damage you'd do.

- TYPE: Racing
- PUBLISHER: Acclaim
- LAST PREVIEW: PSW#2
- ETA: October



COUNTRY DRIVE Chances of survival? Less than zero.



IT'S FAST, IT'S FURIOUS Cinematic links are coincidental.



"GERROFF MOI LANE" The legendary truck driving spirit.



MORE CAR-NAGE Vehicles crashing. Get it yet?



GREAT IMPACT The game's visuals are already looking incredible.



CROSS TOWN TRAFFIC LA residents will feel at home with the scenery.

## TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON

REALISM DOESN'T HAVE TO BE ANAL AND DULL. REALISM, TOM CLANCY-STYLE, CAN BE TERRIFYING.

GHOST RECON IS A SCARY GAME, EVEN IF there aren't actually any real ghosts in it. It's scary because it almost feels like you're genuinely on the frontline, battling terrorists in a familiar Clancy-esque scenario. Everything you've struggled to achieve in each mission can be lost in a split second. There aren't any health packs to pick up or armour bonuses hidden behind bushes. You can't bumble into a Kalashnikov-wielding terrorist and run away with him pumping hot lead into your scurrying arse while a health bar slowly depletes. Forget about a health bar altogether. Forget ploughing into the

unknown and hoping to machine gun your way out of trouble. This is no *TimeSplitters*-esque blast-a-thon. One shot kills. Poke your head out without making sure the coast is clear and you'll probably lose it.

It's a totally different experience when death lurks behind every bit of scenery and the tension and fear multiplies with every footstep you inch forward. Forget all those strategies you've developed over

hours of Quaking and Splitting. Even reloading seems to take an age as realism rears its terrifyingly anxious head in the form of a timer bar that slowly inches to full as you fumble to slap a new mag into your rifle. It also pops up when you try to pick locks and leaves you totally vulnerable in the process, just as it would in real life. It's a nerve-wracking wait as the bar fills until you can once again point your M16 in

anger, but it's also an exhilarating one.

The only issue we have at this point is the artificial intelligence which lacks, er, intelligence. If they can get this fixed Ghost Recon could be well worth a look.

- TYPE: Shooter
- PUBLISHER: Ubi Soft
- LAST PREVIEW: N/A
- ETA: October



I WANT A SHOT Hopefully the buggy AI will be tweaked.



AFTER DARK Nighttime goggles. For military purposes.



LOOK HARD Try to spot the ghosts. Masters of stealth.





**KI STRIKE** Yes, your main weapon is a key. Don't laugh, alright?



**AAHH-HOOOIEOOOIEOOO!** Well, you try to spell what Tarzan yells.



**ROOM WITH A VIEW** Sora's home is like an adventure playground.

## KINGDOM HEARTS

ADVENTURING WITH CLOUD, SELPHIE, TIDUS AND WAKKA. UM... OKAY... SURE...

### SCEPTICISM IS THE BEST WAY TO DESCRIBE

our feelings towards Square's first post-*FFX* foray into the world of PS2 roleplaying. There's the Disney connection for a start. Shoehorning the casts of the more recent *Final Fantasy* games into worlds already populated by countless Disney favourites was always going to be a difficult task. Making it then appealing to an audience beyond the pre-pubescent was always going to be even tougher. And then there's the issue of a game mechanic drastically different to any previous Square RPG. So it was with some not-entirely-minor trepidation that we slipped the preview code into our test PS2...

At this point, you're probably expecting the usual "But we needn't have worried!" about-face. But the fact is, besides that *PSW* would never stoop to such clichéd journalism, we are more worried now than ever before. Far from rejuvenating our enthusiasm with its gleefully childlike charm, boisterous energy and refreshingly uncomplicated play, the several hours of *Kingdom Hearts* we've experienced thus far have served only to justify our skepticism. If anything's been rejuvenated, it's our cynicism about the whole exercise.

Admittedly we've barely scratched the surface of the undoubtedly lengthy (to

judge by Square's track record, at least) quest on offer, but it does sadden us to report that nothing we've encountered throughout these early stages augurs well for our desire to see it out to the very end. The dialogue is inane, the interface is overly cumbersome, the camera is inadequate, the real-time combat is far too frequent and repetitive, and the "treasure hunt" style quests make you feel like a mere errand boy. Meanwhile the cut-scenes featuring Goofy, Donald, Pluto, Daisy, Chip & Dale, *et al* simply fill us with absolute terror and dread. Wait 'til you hear Minnie Mouse given the power of speech... Urrghh! Please, make it stop!

Still, millions of Japanese gamers can't be wrong (*Was that sarcasm? - Ed*). *Kingdom Hearts* has shifted in hefty amounts since its release earlier this year in the home of videogaming. It must have something going for it. Precisely what that something is shall have to wait for our review in two issues time. Until then we remain ardent sceptics.

- **TYPE:** Action RPG
- **PUBLISHER:** Sony
- **LAST PREVIEW:** *PSW* #2
- **ETA:** December

## "THE CUT-SCENES FILL US WITH ABSOLUTE DREAD"



**ALADDIN SANE** Whichever warped mind devised the concept should be shot.



**TRIFORCE** Goofy and Donald battling a Cerberus. Whatever next?!



**PSYCHEDELIC BABY!** Can we have some of those drugs, please?





W.W.HEELIE Bikes. Designed for hitting people's heads with.



THE NON-CREDIBLE HULK  
Out of retirement for one last job, i.e. his film career failed.

## WWE SMACKDOWN! SHUT YOUR MOUTH OH THE IRONY OF IT ALL.

"IRONIC" IS NOT A TERM YOU'D NORMALLY USE TO DESCRIBE THE WWE. IN YOUR FACE, gargantuan and sweaty, utterly preposterous – yes. Irony? Well, that lies in the fact that in a bit of a gaming first, the *SmackDown!* games are actually more real than the real thing. Think about it. Would you want to mash your thumbs into a bloody, mushy, button deformed pulp when you already know that the result is never in any doubt? Exactly. While the real thing is manufactured better than every chart boy band formed this century, the gaming equivalent is there for you to put whatever spin on it you like.

Do you think The Rock's just a big wuss who gets all the glory because he has independent control over his eyebrows? Then pick Triple HHH and give him a good pummeling with a steel chair. The great thing about *SmackDown! Shut Your Mouth* is that you actually get to play God. We all know the real thing is just one elaborate pantomime but now you get to play the whole thing to your tune. Other fighting games give you a succession of increasingly more difficult rivals to beat. *SmackDown! Shut Your Mouth* gives you a multitude of weird and disturbed classic grapplers, as well as some sexy new and improved ones with plenty of excess baggage. There are more personality clashes than in the entire cast of *Neighbours*. It's mental and we love it all the more for it. Get ready to rumble later this year.

- TYPE: Wrestling
- PUBLISHER: THQ
- LAST PREVIEW: PSW #3
- ETA: November



LORD OF THE RINGS Leaving a ladder there? How careless is that?



FRONT ROW You can even play the role of a fan!



OF MARE, WISE TOP! Listen, I told you to shut your mouth.

"MORE  
CLASHES  
THAN THE  
ENTIRE  
CAST OF  
NEIGHBOURS"



## STAR WARS: BOUNTY HUNTER

### HOW MUCH ARE YOU WORTH?

MOD DWLEY HAS ALWAYS HINTED AT THE RUTHLESS DUM

George Lucas's world, but that interfering Skywalker family always seem to get in the way. This time there's no Empire or Rebellion intrusion to prevent you from slumming it with the most untrustworthy inhabitants of a galaxy far, far away.

We're kinda hoping that most of the bounties are payable dead or alive. Having to transport a handcuffed villain half way across the galaxy isn't the most exciting premise; killing them on sight would be so much easier, especially as you're going to have some competition from an old adversary. Whoever gets to the target first gets the cash.

■ TYPE: Shooter ■ PUBLISHER: LucasArts  
■ LAST PREVIEW: PSW #3 ■ ETA: November



JOHN WOO STYLE It's as clichéd as *The Matrix*. Stop it.



HOVER BOBA Dops, sorry, that's the wrong Fett.



A FETT WORSE THAN DEATH Will the game be decent?



LUC AT THIS! At last! We get to play as the baddies!

## TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4

### ANNUAL UPDATE - IS IT THE NEW FIFA?

CAN YOU SEE THE PATTERN? IT'S CHRISTMAS. PARENTS need to keep the kids quiet so that they can nurse that Christmas Eve hangover in peace. The only time the kids haven't got a joypad glued to their hands is when they've got a skateboard welded to their feet. Money burning hole in pocket... kids wailing, need to shut them up... PS2 fun and skateboarding rolled into one... I'll have *Tony Hawk's 4* please. We all love *Tony Hawk* games so Activision's going to give us exactly what we want, every year, until our fingers drop off.

A recent poll around the office has given a wholehearted thumbs up to the removal of the time limit from the fourth installment of Tony's boarding master class. It's a radical move – you see, games can be updated with more than just new kits – but one which allows you to spend more time getting to know the intricacies of each track without the constant clock ticking panic that can ruin a monumental combo attempt. With courses that are infinitely more elaborate and imaginative than before and can evolve organically as you play, *Tony Hawk 4* could be about to join the likes of *GTA3* in the PS2 time warp club. You pick it up for a quick bash before bedtime, and it spits you out hours later leaving you with a few short winks until you need to get up again for work.

Whether it's all quite enough to encourage you to fork out once more for what is essentially the same game you bought last year is another matter altogether.

■ TYPE: Sports ■ PUBLISHER: Activision  
■ LAST PREVIEW: PSW #3 ■ ETA: November



COURTING DANGER Damn, there used to be a ramp below me...

ANYONE FOR TENNIS? Tony serves up another winner.

350 X 1  
Crossbones

BLUNTLY PUT Christmas number one? Odds 3-1.



# Welcome to VICE CITY

SO IT'S NEARLY HERE, AFTER WHAT SEEMS LIKE THE LONGEST  
TWELVE MONTHS WE'VE EVER ENDURED. BUT WHAT HAS  
ROCKSTAR DONE TO FURTHER THE GRAND THEFT AUTO  
EXPERIENCE? LET'S TAKE A TRIP TO VICE CITY...

WORDS/ DAVID WILDGOOSE







**A TIGHT SPOT** There's clearly greater attention to detail in Vice City's character models.



**POND-ERING HIS NEXT MOVE** Here you can see one of the new moves - the squat. Useful for sniping, apparently.

#### HOW THE HELL DO YOU FOLLOW UP A GAME LIKE GRAND

*Theft Auto 3*? Well, if you're Sony, you opt for the ultra-realistic approach, recreating with unprecedented fidelity a large slab of central London for your own contemporary cars 'n' crime caper, *The Getaway* (see p24). However, if you're Rockstar North (the Scottish studio formerly known as DMA Design), you take the opposite tack, reviving a heightened vision of the 1980s, a decade where greed was good and mullets were mandatory. As with each previous title in the acclaimed series, *Vice City* never takes itself seriously; it does donuts down Serious St, pours Realism into a pair of concrete shoes and snorts coke off the ample breasts of Miss Authenticity. It's spoof-tastic all the way and that's why we love it so much. And now with an exaggerated era such as the Eighties just ripe for the parody plucking, we're confident of falling for *GTA* all over again.

With a multi-million selling blockbuster adding zeroes to Rockstar's bank balance each day, you could be forgiven for thinking *Vice City* is merely the result of a franchise being milked once more. However, a quick scan of the game's features list and a brief glimpse of it in action are enough to not just allay such suspicions but riddle them with bullets from a speeding convertible. This is no hastily cobbled together add-on, repackaged expansion pack or re-released Director's Cut bollocks (hello, *Metal Gear*

*Substance!*), this is a genuine sequel in every respect.

It's got *A Flock of Seagulls* on the soundtrack, for a start. That alone is reason enough to get excited, surely. (*Don't call me Shirley* - *Quick-witted Ed*.) Though if more persuasion is necessary there are more than enough "new and exciting" things eager to provide an incentive to purchase. There are helicopters to fly and motorbikes to ride. Building interiors can be explored throughout a city twice the size of Liberty's three islands combined. But I'm getting ahead of myself. Let's rewind to the beginning...

The most immediate thing of new-ness, and perhaps even the most significant addition, is the developer's decision to give the hero a name and the power of speech. In stark contrast to the nameless, tabula rasa, lead character of *GTA3*, in *Vice City* you'll be stepping into the stone-washed denim and gaudy Hawaiian shirt of Tommy Vercetti, ex-con and former goon of crime boss Sonny Forelli. It's an interesting move on Rockstar North's behalf. The lack of any discernible personality inherent in the "GTA3 dude" created a moral void that enhanced the sensation that you were merely playing a videogame, thus dispensing with any possible concerns about the abundance of graphic violence and adult themes.

Now we have Tommy Vercetti, a fully fleshed out character voiced by Ray Liotta, with a background, motive, relationships,



## THE PLAYERS

The streets of Vice City house every kind of reprobate and obnoxious human scum. Here's a few of the shady characters Tommy will encounter during his life of crime.



**Name: Ricardo Diaz**

Gun collector. Always armed. Has private army/militia and is heavily guarded at all times. Has been involved in long-running battle for narcotics business in Vice City. Thought to be responsible for 18 murders.



**Name: Gonzales**

Works for Colonel Juan Garcia Cortez. Greedy - known to take bribes; could try bribing to find out more about Cortez' operation.



**Name: Pastor Richards**

Maniac firebrand preacher, obsessed with money. Fervent anti-communist. Obsessed with nuclear winter. Hateful human being, but menace to society uncertain at present. Possible polygamist.



**Name: Phil Cassidy**

Redneck arms dealer. Fighting war with Mexican gun-running gangs.



**Name: Big Mitch Baker**

Vietnam veteran, turned motorbike enthusiast. Won Purple Heart for killing village full of Vietcong. Jailed on 13 occasions. Believed to be implicated in narcotics distribution.







**REAR VIEW** The busy streets just got even busier with a reputed vehicle count in excess of 100.



**INTERIOR DESIGN** At least 50 buildings throughout the city will be open for inside exploration.



**THAT'S A STRETCH** Could one of the new career missions pit you as a chauffeur in a stretch limo?



and a reason to exist. Suddenly everything carries more weight; events assume genuine meaning. Of course, most players probably won't give it a moment's thought as they're drive-by shooting countless pedestrians or popping the heads of a gang of Mexican drug-dealers, but it's something for the rest of us to ponder when that pub conversation inevitably veers drunkenly towards the issue of videogames as art.

#### EMPIRE BUILDING

Before the start of the game, Sonny Forelli entrusted Vice City to Tommy and tasked with taking over the place by any means necessary. Unfortunately, he blew it, losing all Forelli's donated money in the process. Sonny ain't happy, so Tommy finds himself starting from scratch, scrounging what work he can from his few contacts in the underworld in an effort to rebuild the Forelli empire. Curiously, the development team has been dropping hints without actually confirming that Tommy won't be the only playable character in the game. Such a possibility throws up all kinds of scenarios in our over-active imagination that only serve to emphasise the increased focus on narrative depth. Will you have your own gang? Does Tommy die at some point? Are there squad-based missions? All questions to be

answered in our imminent review.

As in *GTA3* you will receive missions from various gang leaders (see panel) to gradually reveal a narrative that's big on backstabbing, double-crosses and triple-bluffs. Rockstar North promises over 100 of these story missions, though the final figure may well end up closer to 150. Whether progress through the story will be linear – again, as in *GTA3* – or allow you to ally yourself to a particular gang (as in *GTA2* on PSone) is unclear at this stage. We have our fingers firmly crossed that the latter eventuates.

To complement the story, there are of course numerous side quests to pursue. The brilliantly realised Career missions (Taxi, Paramedic, Vigilante and Firefighter) will all return and be accompanied by a handful of new avenues of employment, possibly including Pizza Delivery, Chauffeur (in a stretch limo, natch) and maybe even Funeral Services. No word yet on the inclusion of the eagerly awaited Pimp career though.

Of course no sequel would be complete without the usual assortment of bright and shiny new things to play with. In this regard, *Vice City* fails to disappoint; it's new weapons and vehicles are as bright and shiny as they come. A hefty arsenal of 40 weapons is promised, featuring everything from the

simple bladed kitchen implement to innumerable guns of increasing capacity for projectile destruction (see panel). To aid in your desire to litter the streets with dead bodies, the targeting system has been revamped to make distinguishing between enemies and innocents allegedly hassle-free, while snipers can benefit from the ability to kneel for a steadier aim.

In raw number terms, for those easily impressed by this sort of thing, there are now well over 100 vehicles compared to *GTA3*'s mere (Mere? – Easily Impressed Ed) 50 modes of transport. Aside from the predictable predilection for cars of the convertible variety, some familiar engines from TV shows such as *The A-Team*, *Knight Rider*, *Starsky & Hutch* (wasn't that the 70s?) and even *Airwolf* will be there for the keen-eyed player to discover.

Perhaps the most gameplay relevant aspect of the whole vehicle angle, though, is the improved damage modelling. The greater polygonal and physics detail enabled by Rockstar's greater understanding of the PS2 hardware means you can actually shoot out the tyres and windows of any vehicle. The implications of the successful use of these tactics are obvious: instead of ramming a car until it fireballs, why not pop a couple of its tyres then watch it





# TOOLS OF THE TRADE



## MACHETE

Perfect for a silent takedown. A hint towards a stealth focus in some missions, perhaps?



## CHAINSAW

Excellent for crowded areas, like a shopping mall, for example. Or a school playground.



## SCREWDRIVER

Just the thing for extracting information from your enemy's henchman, or maybe some DIY car repairs.



## SHOP

Inside the all-new Ammu-Nation store. It's a gun-crazed psychopaths wildest dream come true. Which is why you're here.

career off the road? Anything that expands the gameplay possibilities is a fine thing, as far as we're concerned.

Which is why we're less enthused by the reputed 80 minutes of cut-scenes and ten hours of radio. Sure, they're nice to have – they certainly add a lovely polished sheen to proceedings – but we'd happily trade them in for more side missions and hidden bonuses. More, tougher to find, packages, please! Crazier, more inventive, rampages, too! More valuable rewards for insanely stupid stunts and daring driving would be good, thanks.

## ONLY TIME WILL TELL

Things like the supposedly improved artificial intelligence of cops, gang members and pedestrians (cops chasing other criminals, for instance, rather than just you) are all well and good, but we'll believe it when we see it. Which should be quite soon, actually. We're expecting review code any day now. Only then will we truly discover how in hell you can top a game like *GTA3*.

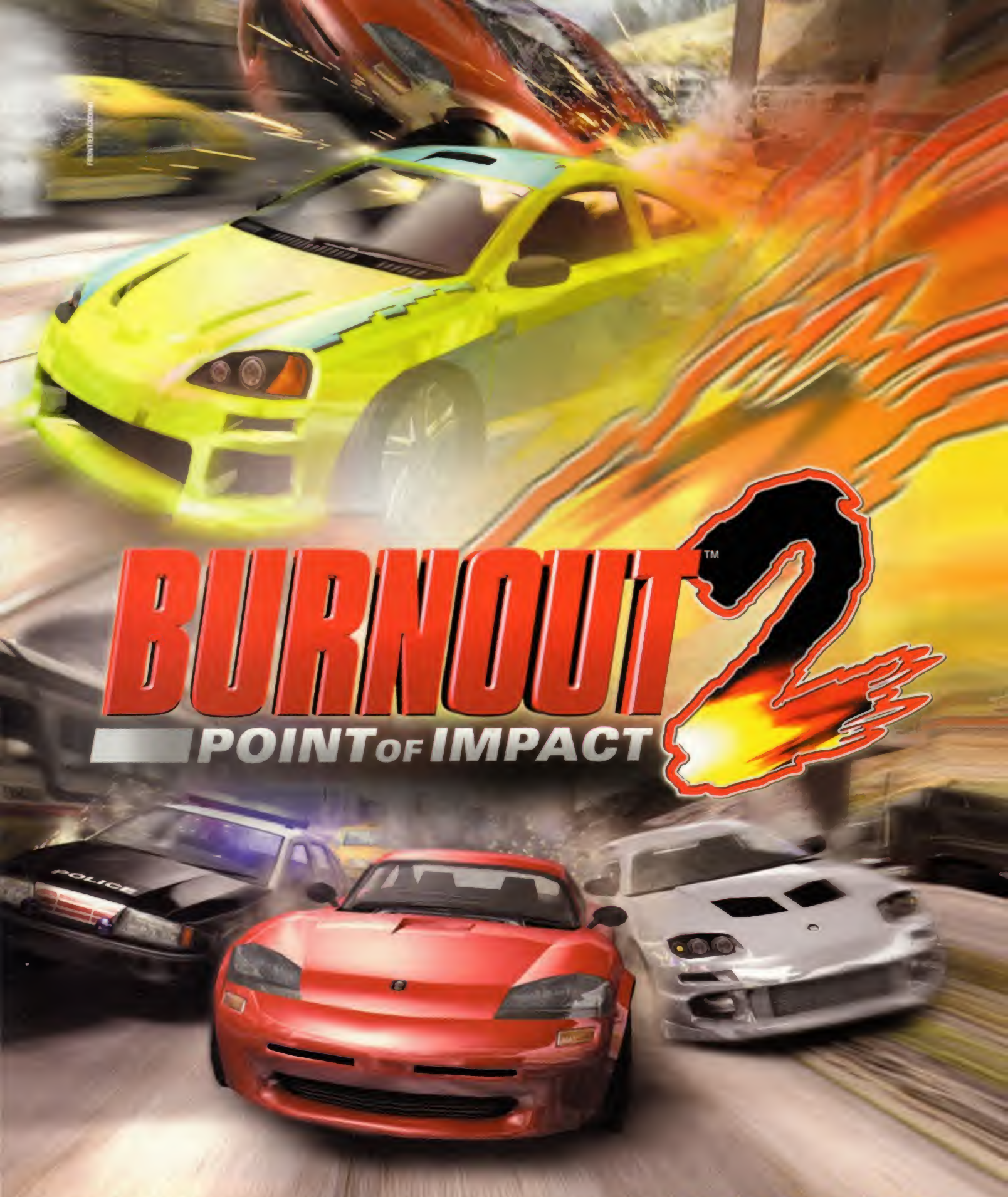
**PLANET ROCK** We'd like to see guys breakdancing on cardboard along the sidewalk. Please!



**MARINE MAYHEM** Due to Vice City's seaside location, there'll be more boats to steal and drive.







# **BURNOUT<sup>TM</sup> 2**

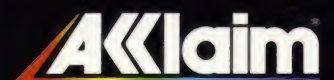
## **POINT OF IMPACT**

**THINK YOU KNOW BURNOUT? THINK AGAIN**



PlayStation<sup>®</sup>2

[www.acclaimau.com](http://www.acclaimau.com)





# "DON'T CALL ME LARA"

MEET KURTIS. HE'S THE FIRST PLAYABLE CHARACTER OTHER THAN LARA IN ANY TOMB RAIDER GAME EVER. DOESN'T LOOK THAT PLEASED ABOUT IT, DOES HE?

/ STEVEN WILLIAMS

**THESE ARE THE FIRST** images to leave Core, creator of *Tomb Raider*, of Lara's new chum. This is Kurtis Trent. He's a dynamic young treasure hunter with a whiff of patchouli oil about him — get that crazy T-shirt, it's bound to be Korn or maybe that young Elvis Presley chap or something — who's after much the same things as Lara [other than a slaver's fan base who want to see him in a crutchless leather nurse's outfit, that is. We assume]. At first, Kurtis is in direct competition with Lara, but as the game progresses the pair become allies. And this is how you'll come to be playing as this young man during certain sections of *Angel of Darkness*.

You may remember *Project Eden*, the slightly disappointing puzzle title also published by Eidos and also developed by Core. That gave you four characters with which to solve your way to the end and, although you won't be able to switch between the two playables in *Tomb Raider*

at will, you will find some of *Project Eden*'s dynamic creeping in.

## IT'S KURTIS FOR YOU

Naturally, there are considerable bonuses to playing as this historic new character. After all, if there weren't, people would just complain that his jugs weren't perky enough. Not least of his benefits is his ability with weapons — Kurtis is intended to be the brawn in the partnership, while Lara provides the breasts. Brains. Sorry. Perhaps his most notable implement of damage is his huge throwing star-type object, apparently an ancient Lux Veritatis weapon forged from a super-rare alloy found in a meteorite. This metal, ferilium, is part of what gives it such special properties, and little Kurtis can truly unleash its deadly spikiness. Kurtis has knowledge of the blade's true name, which in this mystical world apparently helps. And we're guessing it's not called Gerald. The weapon was part of the inheritance he received when his >



**STOP OR FLL PLUNG** Kurtis bears a unique weapon.



**SILENT BUT VIOLENT** Don't be fooled: he loves a ruck.



**LARA CROFT  
TOMB RAIDER:  
THE ANGEL OF DARKNESS**

**SPRAY HELLO,  
WAVE GOODBYE**

LARA'S ALWAYS ENJOYED A GOOD SWIM, BUT IT'S NEVER LOOKED QUITE AS GOOD AS THIS.

FOR SOME ARCANE REASON, PS2 DOES water incredibly well. That fact's not wasted on Eidos – cue gorgeous rippling environments and a sexy hint of underworld green to the soggy sections. All that aqua action is a bit of a mixed blessing, however: if you've slipped from a 100ft crumbling wall you'll be glad of the splashdown, but when flooded tunnels fill up with shadow-wracked machinery and psycho enemies... then you'll change your mind. Swimming puzzles do at least provide a credible excuse for timed puzzles, however.



**STAINS MASSIVE** Instead of cleaning up, Kurtis simply walked away.

father died – bet he wishes he'd got the sports car instead – along with some strange objects known as the Periapt Shards, the existence of which is adding to his troubles. And this being *Tomb Raider*, Kurtis's pop didn't die peacefully in his sleep while a beautiful lap dancer got dressed and stole his wallet. No. He died of being murdered by none other than...

**LOOK AWAY NOW!**

There's some minor plot-spoiler action coming up right here, so if you want to penetrate Lara's world with all its misty plot membranes intact, skip to the end. And if you're just a tart for this kind of thing, well, don't. Kurtis Trent's dad died of being murdered by none other than Monsieur Eckhardt, the big bad guy who's been so pivotal in making Lara's life such a misery

of late. We can safely assume that it's this particular fact that brings the pair together after their original *contretemps*.

Never fear, however, as *Tomb Raider* is not about to go the same way as *Metal Gear Solid* and dump its main character in favour of a far less interesting one. *Angel of Darkness* promises an angel and delivers; you still play as Lara for around 85 percent of the game. And while she herself remains highly recognisable, much has changed beneath the skin. Your actual raiding experience is altered considerably by the new, freer-moving Lara. In previous versions all movement was defined by a grid system, so each move always produced relocations of exactly the same amount. These distances also equated to the squares the game was built out of – thus, if you could spot and count the



**SMOOTH OPERATOR** Lara looks better as she gets older...



**THE BIG MATCH** The lighting gives fantastic atmosphere.



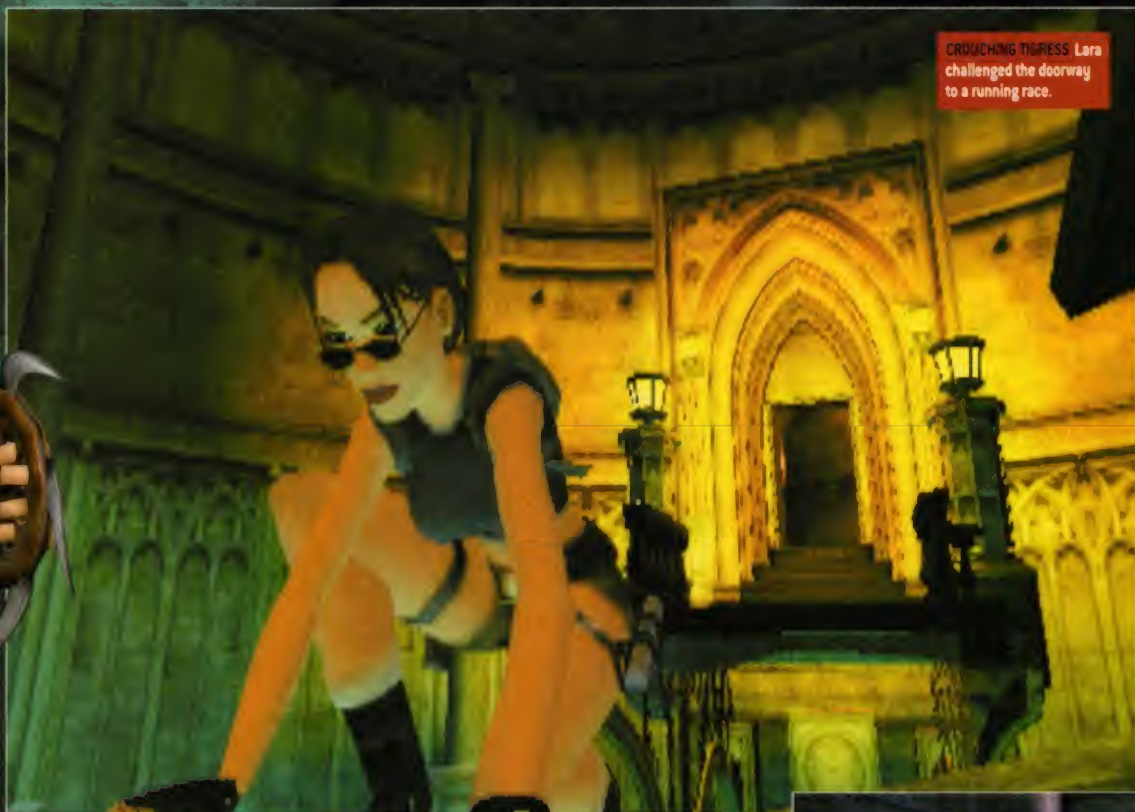
**SLEEPLESS KNIGHTS** She never was very good at meeting people.







**"KURTIS'S  
DAD DIED  
OF BEING  
MURDERED  
BY NONE  
OTHER  
THAN..."**



**CROUCHING TIGRESS** Lara challenged the doorway to a running race.

squares separating you from your destination across the gorge or wherever, you could work out exactly what kind of jump you should use. No more. For a start, the visuals are far more advanced and no longer rely on such an obvious system of tiles. And for another thing, Lara's running and jumping animations no longer lock her into a set routine.

This means timing is now key as you fling yourself around, whereas before all you had to do was press the jump button early enough for a leaping animation to be tacked on at the end of the 'tile' – failure meant the annoying vision of the world's most athletic and daring archaeologist sinking stupidly off a cliff to her death, while you frantically hammered jump and swore. No more! Obviously this new level of input only makes the game more entertaining. Set distances would no longer work, anyway, as Lara's abilities now

increase during the course of the game. At certain points you'll gain extra points towards abilities such as running speed, jumping and upper body strength (for breaking down doors), but players can augment these by searching out the secret areas. Inquisitive players now get the far greater reward of physical upgrades, rather than a few packs of ammo or a stone trinket in the shape of a pig's ankle, or whatever they were, and this in turn means they can reach places less thorough players can't access until much later on.

#### **MUCH NI-LARA-TY**

Also aiming to make *Angel of Darkness* more fun is a new approach to minor errors. Too many times Ms Croft ended her life at the bottom of a gorge because players carelessly pressed the wrong button. No more! Well, obviously you can still give Lara the plummet if you really try – or are



**NEW MAN** Adding another character was a bold step.

## **CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE NERD KIND**

**COULD THERE BE  
SOMETHING FROM BEYOND  
THE STARS AT WORK IN  
LARA'S LATEST ADVENTURE?**

**IT'S CURIOUS. THAT SYMBOL LOOKS** distinctly like a 'grey', the alien race that's taken over cattle mutilation and hillbilly prong-buggering duties from the little green men. Does it allude to an alien presence in *Angel of Darkness*? Or is it just bit of decoration on the wall? Sadly, we reckon it's the second one. There are supernatural shenanigans occurring and *Core* has referenced *The X-Files* in the past, but we think this just looks like some kind of gig. There's probably even a big sweating roadie, er, just out of shot.



**DIVE DIVE DIVE!** Those three little words every girl loves.

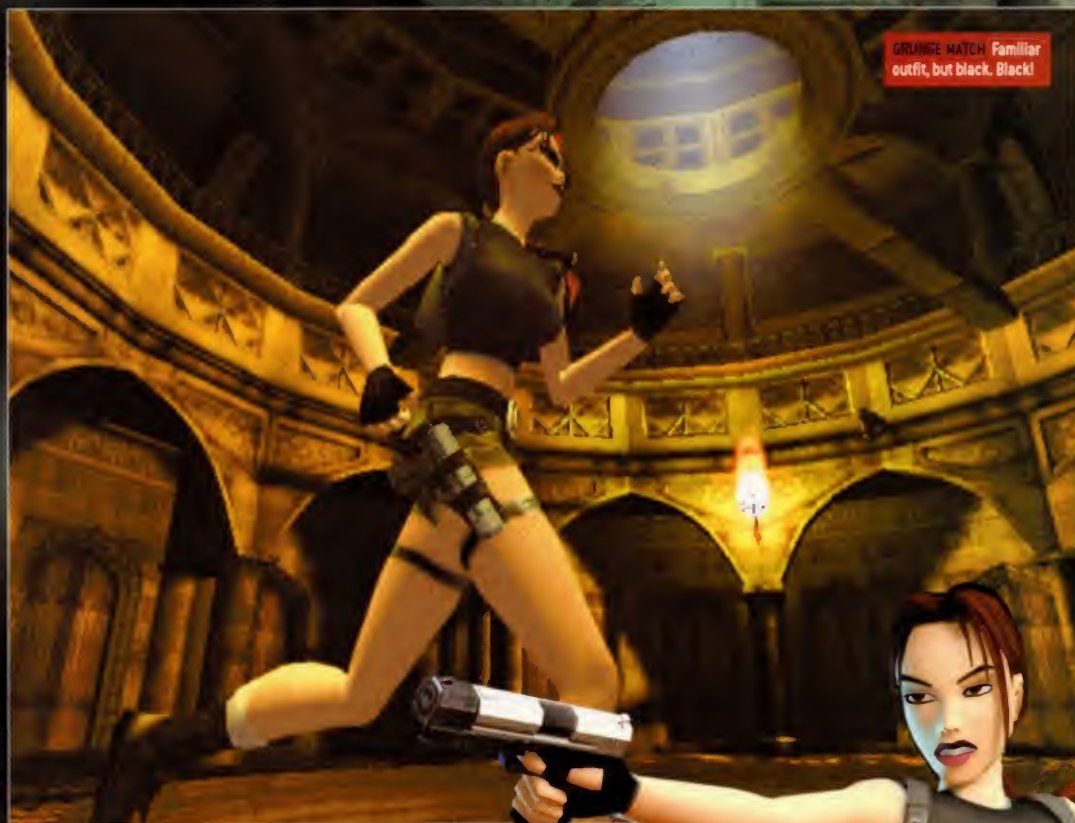
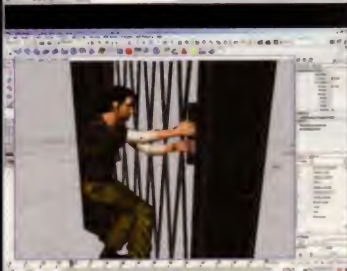


# LARA CROFT TOMB RAIDER: THE ANGEL OF DARKNESS

## YOU CAN TELL BY THE WAY HE USES HIS WALK

WELL YOU CAN'T YET, AS THESE WIREFRAME SHOTS DON'T REALLY SHOW IT. YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO TRUST THE EXPERTS...

THE CHARACTERS IN THESE SHOTS ALL look fantastic, but they're not moving. Even Amanda Vanstone can look good when she's not moving. Well, *really* not moving, like not even breathing. Anyway, rest assured that all of *Angel of Darkness's* denizens look absolutely fabulous in motion, as extensive work has gone into their animations. Lara's gait is immediately recognisable, but far smoother than before – and of course she's got several new moves to show off, as is always the case. Kurtis has been hand-animated (no ill-fitting motion capture here) by a different member of the team, so he's noticeably different to use. He also has moves and abilities unique to him. All the sequences we saw of early animations, such as abseiling SWAT-style police teams and aggressive room clearances, were extremely impressive. And here's a sneaky look at how these things come to be...



GRACE MATCH Familiar outfit, but black. Black!

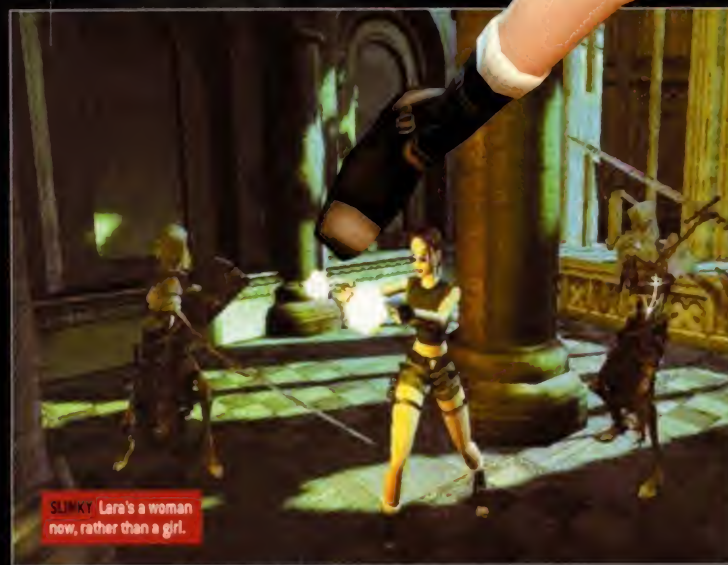
really inept – but she's considerably more interested in her own survival than before. She'll deal with accidental nudges off cliffs by twisting to grab the edge and save herself, allowing you time to drag her back up to safety. She can't dangle forever, though (this is another upgradable asset), so be quick about it.

### A TALE OF TWO TITTIES

And then, in order to keep you dangling, there's the plot. Core is exceedingly keen to create a strong tale for this version, rather than just a cobbled together excuse for visiting a bunch of far-flung locations with no other connection than a loading screen. *Angel of Darkness* takes place in just three medium-flung places, namely France, a little bit underneath France and Prague. The Paris (that's in France, for our US readers) sections represent a return to the core – thankyouverymuch, goodnight and god

bless! – values of Tomb Raiding, with exploration and investigation to the fore. The sections under the capital in particular promise some classic moments, as Lara returns to her favourite hobby of teetering from monumental pieces of lost architecture: Core recognised the need to return to the sense of awesome scale that made the first games feel so epic. Prague, meanwhile, sees the game shift to a far more action-orientated style as the denouement nears and the super-weird adversaries really get into their stride. It's here, too, that you'll really get to know Kurtis Trent. Can he prove there's more to Tomb Raiding than staring at Lara Croft's pixelated arse? November holds the answers, and we'll bring them to you first.

PSW



SLEEKY Lara's a woman now, rather than a girl.

“UNDER THE CAPITAL PROMISES SOME CLASSIC MOMENTS”





## INTERVIEW ADRIAN SMITH, CORE DESIGN

SEE THE ACTUAL WORDS OF LARA'S 'OPERATIONS DIRECTOR' SPOOKILY APPEAR IN WRITTEN FORM!

### GOOD MORNING MR SMITH! QUICK, WHY IS ANGEL OF DARKNESS GOING TO GET PEOPLE EXCITED AGAIN?

This game will create excitement for quite a few reasons. Lara has been put into a new environment, one where there aren't that many tombs. She uses the skill and attributes that have been nurtured through tomb raiding to help her succeed in this new quest. Traditional gamers will be excited by the prospect of her return, they want to see the new technology that PS2 has bought to the game, they want to know what happened to her since she was last seen in a sealed tomb, and they want to see how she reacts in new places in a situation that she has never faced.

### WILL LARA HAVE THE CHOICE OF USING VIOLENCE OR STEALTH ALL THE TIME, OR JUST FOR CERTAIN SECTIONS?

At the beginning of the game Lara finds herself unarmed so she needs stealth in order to make her way through the surroundings so that she has time to unravel the situation that she finds herself in. We wanted her to use different approaches depending on the task, so while you can use both styles, they will be controlled somewhat by where you are within the game.

### HOW WILL THE SAVE SYSTEM WORK? WILL THERE BE LIMITED SAVES, A RETURN OF THE CRYSTAL SYSTEM, OR WILL YOU BE ABLE TO SAVE ANYWHERE?

This is something that we're still balancing. Both systems have advantages and disadvantages but we hope that we may have found a system that offers more rewards to the player and how they choose to play the game.

### WHAT ELEMENTS MAKE THIS GAME 'DARKER' THAN BEFORE?

The storyline for a start. Lara is used to embarking on quests at short notice and

the action comes through the competition that she meets. In *Angel of Darkness* Lara has been framed and is at the mercy of the city rather than the wilderness. Her environments are darker, grittier and she is being hunted, a situation that she has never experienced. There are also historical and mystical elements and they all fuse to create a sinister experience

### WHAT MOVES DOES KURTIS HAVE THAT LARA DOESN'T? AND WHAT UNIQUE WEAPONS DOES HE USE?

Both characters will share certain moves and hold ones unique to them. Kurtis' weapon remains clouded in mystery, it's not a knife or a gun but a breathtakingly brutal and efficient way of finishing off his enemies. It complements all his attributes, both physically and mystically.

### ARE THE PUZZLES LIMITED TO THE BEGINNING, AFTER WHICH THE GAME FOCUSES ON SHOOTING AND ACTION?

Puzzles are found pretty much through the whole game. They are an integral part of *Tomb Raider* games and something we will always continue with. However, we have highlighted them more in some areas. We want to perfect the mixture of action and puzzles.

### TR3 SUFFERED FROM A LACK OF ATMOSPHERE DUE TO ITS NEAR-SILENCE, WHICH WAS ESPECIALLY STRANGE AFTER THE BRILLIANT AMBIENT SOUNDS OF TR2. WHAT EFFORTS HAVE YOU PUT INTO THE BACKGROUND SOUNDS HERE?

The background sounds featured in *The Angel Of Darkness* are of a standard previously unseen within the *Tomb Raider* series. We have been very fortunate in being able to use the London Symphony Orchestra. The quality of the writing, plus the talents of the LSO have guaranteed a standard of in-game music and ambience that we are very excited about. It must



SLIM SHADY: Gothic on a grand scale – her world's gone bad.

have been quite daunting for our in-house musicians but after hearing the final versions they can't stop talking about it now, and we're looking forward to the reaction from the fans.

### WHAT NEW MOVES DOES LARA HAVE? CAN SHE FIGHT WITHOUT WEAPONS? CAN SHE DISTRACT GUARDS?

Lara's moves have gone from around 30 in the past games to currently over 250 so the difference is there for everyone to see. She uses weapons but is also very effective in hand-to-hand combat, and stealth elements will mean that she doesn't necessarily have to blast her way through every obstacle that she encounters on her travels.

### WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE NEW CHARACTER, KURTIS? HOW DOES HE FIT IN WITH THE OVERALL PLOT?

Whilst Kurtis shares a common goal with Lara they are very different people. He is a lot more direct and violent. His history has made him into the dynamic fighter he is, and his reasons for his involvement are unquestionable. Kurtis isn't a man of many words, and his actions need no verbal backup. He has a unique weapon that I'm sure will create interest among his fans, as well as mystical powers. I won't say more than that at this stage.

### HOW MUCH OF THE GAME INVOLVES PLAYERS USING KURTIS? DO YOU THINK HE'LL BE POPULAR? RAIDEN IN MGS2, FOR INSTANCE, WAS NOTHING LIKE AS POPULAR AS SNAKE.

We knew we wanted a new character but we were also aware of the risks involved. The last thing we want to do is upset Lara's fans so we've introduced him relatively gradually. He will only be playable for a proportion of the game so that Lara remains the focus. We'd love him to be popular, he's a great character that

brings a lot to the game, fingers crossed the public will take to him like Lara.

### DO ENEMIES ALWAYS APPEAR IN THE SAME PLACE AND ACT THE SAME WAY? OR WILL IT BE MORE RANDOM? WILL THEY HUNT FOR LARA, OR ARE THEY JUST TRIGGERED BY HER PRESENCE?

The AI in this game is fantastic and they will react to Lara's actions no matter what course she chooses to take.

### CAN YOU TELL US A BIT MORE ABOUT THE STORY OF THE GAME? WHERE AND HOW WILL LARA BE TRYING TO CLEAR HER NAME? WHAT'S HAPPENING IN PRAGUE?

Lara has been accused of the murder of Von Croy and the game revolves around her determination to clear her name by finding out whom or what actually committed the act. This takes her to Paris and Prague where she uncovers evidence of a very sinister organisation. Through detective work it becomes apparent that she is not dealing with a simple murderer but something that has existed through history and could be connected with well known historical events. Obviously we don't want to give too much away at this stage but it's an enthralling story that will travel across more than one game.

### WILL THERE BE AN EROTIC TWIST IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LARA AND KURTIS? WHAT'S KURTIS' MOTIVATION TO HELP LARA IN THE STORY?

Kurtis' motivation comes from his own needs; he wants to find out who committed the murder but initially for different reasons to Lara. He has a personal agenda, and will stop at nothing to unravel the details of what happened. At first they don't work together at all but as his presence in the game increases so does their interaction. As for an "erotic twist" well, you're just going to have to play the game to see that!



SEX PISTOLS: Lara remains a strong female lead in a male-dominated arena.



GameCube

Xbox

PC

PlayStation 2

Game Boy Advance

SSonic

**YOUR GUIDE TO THE  
FUTURE OF GAMING  
AND BEYOND!**

**HYPER»»**

**AUSTRALIA'S GAMING AUTHORITY**

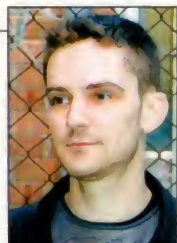


# REVIEWS

ATTENTION! THIS SECTION CONTAINS EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO DECIDE WHAT TO BUY, AND WHAT TO LEAVE ALONE.

## MEET THE TEAM

HELLO, WE'RE THE TEAM, AND WE'RE PLEASED TO MEET YOU, TOO.

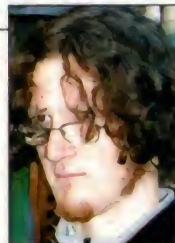


/ DAVID WILDGOOSE EDITOR

**Game of the month:** *Project Zero*. It's certainly taken its toll on my sleep, not only 'cos it's so scary but because I can't stop playing it.

**My gift for a Samurai:** A hair band for his dashing top-knot.

**Looking forward to:** *GTA Vice City*. I'd dearly love to see a gang reputation system like in *GTA2*, though.

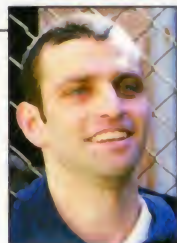


/ DANIEL STAINES WRITER

**Game of the month:** *Hitman 2*. It's suits the brooding, bad guy persona I've been cultivating.

**My gift for a Samurai:** A new control method, perchance? I've just about had enough of spinning on the spot. *Project Zero* has shown the way forward - literally.

**Looking forward to:** *Summoner 2*. The first was a flawed gem. Here's hoping they fixed the niggling problems.



/ JOHN DEWHURST WRITER

**Game of the month:** *Kelly Slater*. Sure, it's just *Tony Hawk* on one long rail, but it's far better than it has any right to be.

**My gift for a Samurai:** Something I can pick up duty free.

**Looking forward to:** *Blood Rayne*. Far from the cynical, cliched shooter you'd expect.



/ MARCH STEPNIK WRITER

**Game of the month:** *Turok Evolution*. Although I know I'm on my own here, I still think it's big, stupid fun.

**My gift for a Samurai:** A bonsai. The perfect gift for someone who needs nothing.

**Looking forward to:** *Madden 2003*. Soccer, schmoccer - gridiron is the beautiful game!



/ JACKSON GOTHE-SNAPE WRITER

**Game of the month:** *Timesplitters 2*. They've actually calculated the water level in the barrels. Genius!

**My gift for a Samurai:** Some hair grooming advice after the unanimous success of my own recent DIY trim.

**Looking forward to:** *Pro Evolution Soccer 2*. I'm itching to guide my beloved Europort to the title.



/ GARY CUTLACK WRITER

**Game of the month:** *Onimusha 2*. If there's no horror in survival horror, shouldn't we just call it survival?

**My gift for a Samurai:** Something practical, perhaps for the kitchen. A sandwich grill, maybe.

**Looking forward to:** *Twin Caliber*. Not sure why, but it appeals to my perverse need to test myself on stupidly difficult games.



/ MIKEY FOLEY WRITER

**Game of the month:** *The Thing*. I've taken to locking my squad mates outside in the snow just to make them even more wary and paranoid.

**My gift for a Samurai:** A nice tea set. Didn't Samurais do that whole tea ceremony thing? I'm sure I read it in my Oriental Adventures D&D books.

**Looking forward to:** *Combat Queen* (see p21). 'Nuff said.



/ STEVEN WILLIAMS WRITER

**Game of the month:** *Timesplitter 2*. I am the deathmatch king! Fear my monkey assisted skills!

**My gift for a Samurai:** I'll let you know once the new Ikea catalogue is released.

**Looking forward to:** *GTA Vice City*. A Flock of Seagulls, eh? "And I raa-aaan, I ran so far away..." Er, how does the rest of it go again?

## THE SCORING SYSTEM

### PSW RATINGS

THE PSW SCORING SYSTEM IS DESIGNED TO MAKE ALL YOUR GAMES PURCHASING DECISIONS SIMPLE. HERE'S HOW TO TRANSLATE THOSE NUMBERS INTO DEFINITIVE ADJECTIVES.

10/10	ESSENTIAL
9/10	BRILLIANT
8/10	GREAT
7/10	GOOD
6/10	DECENT
5/10	AVERAGE
4/10	POOR
3/10	BAD
2/10	BLOODY RUBBISH
1/10	AVOID AT ALL COSTS



### PSW GAME OF THE MONTH

The Game of the Month Award is precisely what it says, the title that in PSW's opinion is the essential purchase of the month. In the event of multiple games receiving the same score, we simply pick the one we think is the must-have option if you can only afford one game a month. Go and buy it now. Run!



### PSW MUST BUY

Typically awarded to games that score 8/10 or above, representing one of the best in its genre. So if you're a fan of this particular type of game, then you'll be more than happy with this purchase. Simply, if you like this type of game, you 'must buy'. Clever eh?

## REVIEW CONTENTS



ONE DAY REVIEWS WILL BE 3D HOLOGRAMS SPINNING SILENTLY ABOVE YOUR WATCH, BUT UNTIL THEN, WE'LL USE PIECES OF PAPER STUCK TOGETHER. TRY NOT TO MIX THEM UP, NOW.

### PS2 NEW RELEASES

- 058 ONIMUSHA 2
- 064 HITMAN 2
- 066 THE THING
- 068 PROJECT ZERO
- 072 NEED FOR SPEED: HOT PURSUIT 2
- 074 TUROK EVOLUTION

### 076 FERRARI F355 CHALLENGE

- 078 MX SUPERFLY
- 080 METROPOLIS MANIA
- 081 KELLY SLATER'S PRO SURFER
- 082 JIMMY NEUTRON, BOY GENIUS
- 083 LETHAL SKIES
- 084 NINJA ASSAULT
- 085 LARGO WINCH





# ONIMUSHA 2

LIVE BY THE SWORD, DIE BY THE SWORD. WELL, IN FACT, JUST DIE MAINLY – AND HORRIBLY AND PAINFULLY AT THAT.

TYPE	ACTION ADVENTURE
PLAYERS	1
OUT	NOW
DISTRIBUTOR	THQ
PRICE	\$99.95
DEVELOPER	CAPCOM
RATED	MA15+

#### SEE IT ON DVD

/ More claret than a wine bar  
/ More violence than Redfern  
/ More blades than a paddock  
/ Just more of everything!

#### THE TROUBLE WITH EVIL NEMESSES

is that they never know when to quit. You can kick their butt half way round the world and back but they'll always come begging for more. You'd think they would have learned their lesson by now, but oh no – if the opportunity to wreak havoc is there then they'll be back in action before you can say 'Mr Big returns for the sequel'.

Take Nobunaga Oda, the ruthless warlord from *Onimusha* as an example. You'd have thought that enough was enough after having his sorry hide well and truly whipped in the first game, but, like a bad smell, evil always lingers and Nobunaga and his demon buddies are out in force once again. Of course, bearing in mind how good the original *Onimusha* was – brought to us by the same people who created the *Resident Evil* series of games – maybe this isn't such a bad thing after all. If it means that furious sword slashing and hordes of bad guys ready to be dispatched is the order of the day then bring on the action and pay thanks to that evil spirit of persistence; if it wasn't for those wonderful baddies and there endless quest for world domination we wouldn't have anybody to beat up now would we?

Set 13 years on from the original, *Onimusha 2* begins in spectacularly violent fashion. Nobunaga,

freshly bolstered with a major infusion of demon power, begins a reign of terror, sweeping across the country ransacking and destroying every village he encounters. Unfortunately for Nobunaga, one such village he destroys is the home of legendary samurai Yagyu Jubei who, after returning from a long journey, finds his village in ruins. Amid the burnt buildings and piles of corpses Jubei finds one solitary survivor who uses his dying breath to tell the samurai that Nobunaga is to blame. Swearing vengeance, Jubei picks up his sword and sets out, determined to finish Nobunaga once and for all (until *Onimusha 3* comes out, presumably).

It's a classic set-up and the opening few rainy locations perfectly set the tone for the game: dark,

moody and exquisitely violent. As much as we might wish that Ron Jeremy is the most influential man in cinema, that honour has to go to Japanese director Akira Kurosawa and it's clear that his timeless samurai epics have been a major influence on the game. Each scene and character has been meticulously researched and every effort has been made to recreate the world of feudal Japan. *Onimusha 2* goes beyond the simple premise of hacking demons apart – this is classy gaming where, the concept of rampaging demons aside, you actually feel like you're part of ancient oriental history.

Part of what makes *Onimusha 2* so compelling is its visual splendour. If the original game showed



SPIN ON THIS Enemies can be dispatched with a spear to the ribs.



A BIT FISHY Walk over a giant aquarium complete with killer fish.





BOW-CROCS Jubei can use ranged weapons as well.



MEAN STREETS Helpfully the brothel is opposite the pub.



WHO WANTS SOME? It's all about fighting. Lots of fighting.

what the PlayStation2 was really capable of then *Onimusha 2* raises the bar once again, outdoing *Devil May Cry* even, perhaps the pinnacle of graphical achievement in the genre so far. Once again the game uses 3D characters against pre-rendered backgrounds. The benefit of this is that the characters sport far more detail than they would in a completely 3D environment and it shows. From the elegant costume and weaponry to the animated facial expressions, *Onimusha 2* really shines, easily matching any of the imagery found in *Final Fantasy X*.

But if the characters and their beautiful animation impress then it's the backdrops that really astound. They are, without exception,



SPEARS AND LADDERS Try not to slip on the foggy mountain path.



FAIR FIGHT? Clearly the big chap doesn't have a hope.

stunning with many of them brought to life thanks to perfectly looped video. Waves lap beaches, rivers rapidly flow over rocks and machines turn and whirl while continuously belching steam. But it would all be for nothing if the characters and backgrounds didn't meld perfectly and thankfully this isn't the case, with everything going together like Brixton and dope – the 3D characters look perfect against the backdrops and there's never even a moment where anything feels out of place.

#### EAR PIERCING

Likewise the sound effects perfectly match the environment. The general ambient sounds are all spot on and the constant swish of sword and spear really adds to the excitement. Clashing metal and the screams of dying demons provide a great atmosphere and once again proves that Capcom never goes cheap when it comes to sonics. The >

/ IT EASILY MATCHES ANY OF THE IMAGERY FOUND IN FINAL FANTASY X /

## FRIENDS LIKE THESE

### DEMON KILLING FOR TWO

Jubei doesn't have to take on all the bad guys all by himself. Oh no, he's managed to grab himself four faithful friends. Trouble is, they'll only come and help if you buy them something. Here's a run down on the sort of presents you should get them.



#### KOTARO

Kotaro, the boy ninja, is interested in anything that resembles a toy or gadget. Failing that he's very partial to pets so don't forget to give him any stray animals you may come across.



#### MAGOICHI

Magoichi has turned his back on traditional weapons, preferring to use his trusty rifle instead. But he's a sensitive soul at heart so nurture that with any books that you find.



#### EKEI

Help keep portly Ekei, the team's roly-poly spear-wielding man, happy then by remembering to pass on any odd bits of food and booze that you happen to come across on your travels.



#### OYU

You've probably spotted that Oyu is the only girl of the group, but give yourself a bonus point if you've guessed that she likes all the normal bird-type things like jewellery and flowers.





IT'S A BEACH Believe us, the waves look stunning when they move.



BOX CLEVER Helpful items can be found in the puzzle boxes.

ALL FOR ONE You often have to swap characters.

plentiful voiceovers are passable as well, but bearing in mind the pedigree of English voiceovers in Capcom's survival horror games we weren't really expecting Shakespeare – besides, it never seems quite right when you hear obviously Japanese characters spitting out various English phrases. As if to make up for this minor shortcoming however the music is unusually up-tempo for the genre and goes perfectly with the hardcore hack 'n slash action.

Overall it's all aesthetically very pleasing indeed, going far beyond what we experienced in the original, but how does the gameplay match up with the visuals? As pretty as it looks, it'll never hold your attention if the carpet doesn't match the curtains so to speak. Well it all comes down to how you like your gaming, as *Onimusha 2* is almost exclusively action-based, thinning out the puzzle elements while heavily upgrading the sword-weaving shenanigans. True, there's still the odd point in the game where you must use a specific

item in a certain location and the mind-bending puzzle boxes of the first game return, albeit in a slightly different fashion, but for the most part it's a case of draw weapon, mutilate foes and move on – not that we have a problem with that style of gaming at all you understand.

## CONTROL FREAK

For a game that's so heavily centred around action, the control system needs to be perfect and *Onimusha 2*'s is a bittersweet method indeed. Firstly, its flaws. For some reason, perhaps because of its *Resident Evil* roots, *Onimusha 2* insists on retaining its 'rotation on the spot' movement system rather than updating to the infinitely more preferable camera-relative method. To add insult to injury you're forced into using the D-pad for movement, a confusing experience after so many years spent using the analogue stick. But thankfully, Capcom has enhanced and tightened the controls to compensate. Holding the shoulder

button now allows you to lock onto an opponent so that you're always facing the same enemy. Likewise, when the rumbles get a bit more intense, with several enemies on your back at once, the computer never fails to keep you facing at least one opponent. The benefit of this is you never get caught frantically slashing at thin air while the crafty bad guys sneak behind you. Occasionally you will find your view impaired by an enemy and forced to mash the buttons in hope, but overall it's a slick, intuitive system that belies its simplicity and, once you get used to the D-pad and rotation issues, feels nigh-on perfect.

Backing the refined control system is a healthy selection of combat manoeuvres. Jubei can kick, slash and thrust, and perform various combos using joystick sequences learnt from scrolls hidden within the game world. Each of the four magical weapons at Jubei's disposal have their own distinctive moves as well as magical attacks that can be employed to rain hefty damage on the

## WE NEED WEAPONS – LOTS OF THEM

## JUBEI'S MAGICAL ARMOURY IS MORE THAN A MATCH FOR HIS MANY DEMON OPPONENTS.



### / LIGHTNING SWORD

This electrically charged sword can cause mini-lightning bursts to appear, but is there any truth to the rumour that the sword may come in a flaming variety?



### / ICE SPEAR

Probably the best weapon in the game, this chilled killing utensil can turn the enemy into frozen statues of ice – perfect for shattering into thousands of little pieces.



### / TWIN WIND BLADE

This tornado-causing double-ended blade is truly the business. One quick spin and you're suddenly turned into a walking Kamurok blender – perfect for whipping up a storm.



### / EARTH HAMMER

Ideal for those who prefer to hold a slightly larger tool in their hands, the Earth Hammer can be casually used to cause devastating earthquakes. Not for the faint hearted!





## / THE NEW CHARACTERS ARE AN ABSOLUTE BOON DURING THE TOUGH BOSS BATTLES /

enemy. But it's not just hand-to-hand weapons on offer – Jubei is equally at home in charge of a bow and arrow, and there's even the opportunity to arm yourself with a rifle at a later stage of the game. In terms of destructive power on offer *Onimusha 2* offers an eclectic selection for sword-wielding psychos. However, if you're the sort of person who enjoys tinkering with your equipment then *Onimusha 2* allows you complete control over your weapon upgrades as well.

As in the first game enemies release souls when they die. Jubei can collect these souls and, depending on their colour, use them to increase his powers. Some souls help restore your energy or magic power, while another kind turn you into a demon when collected. Any of the red souls collected can be spent at save points on your weapons and armour, progressing through three levels of quality. As you invest in new equipment, not only does it improve but alter appearance as well, hence Jubei naturally changes his costume

throughout the game as his armour develops. It's a nice touch and one that allows you to visualise your steady increase in power and stature.

### FIGHTING FRIENDS

One of the major new additions to *Onimusha 2* is the fully developed comrade system that allows you to team up with computer-controlled characters during various encounters – an absolute boon during those tough boss battles. Four brave warriors, each with their own particular grudge against Nobunaga and his demon hordes, are ready and willing to step into the fray, risking life and limb all in the name of a good ruckus. They're a mixed bunch (fat bloke, kid, girl and gun freak) and each of them brings something important into the mix and the story in general (see panel). That's not to say they'll jump into battle at the drop of the hat. These guys aren't stupid and if you want them to fight with you then you're going to have to make it worth their while.

Between each level Jubei and his friends hang out in a tavern and it's here that you must give your comrades any items you may have acquired as down payment for any help they may give you later in the game. Thankfully monsters now drop money during battle that can be collected and spent on various items in the shop next door to the tavern. The range of items on offer is huge and the real trick is in deciding what each person might want to receive as a gift. Choose the right gift – say a talkative parrot for the young ninja – and they'll become more likely to help out in battle. Pick a bit of a duffer though, like trying to pass off a compass as a romantic present for the lady (come on chaps – we've all tried it at some point) and you'll cause offence, meaning that you'll have to take on the majority of the bad guys on your own. Of course, one of the best items you can buy your pals are weapon and armour upgrades, which, like Jubei's, again slightly alter each character's appearance and can make a real difference to >





COME FIGHTING Funny hair + flaming sword = evil.



RED MIST There's plenty of blood to be seen during combat.



IT'S THE PITS This pit of spikes is a potential death trap.

### / IT'S JUST SHY OF ABSOLUTE MUST HAVE STATUS /

some of the combat sequences. For example, when Magoichi kicks arse with his five-barrelled rifle upgrade, he really kicks arse.

Who you please the most however has a significant outcome on the way the game's story unfolds. In some cases you'll be forced into tackling certain puzzles or sections of the game on your own but buy a friend's affection and you'll often be able to control one of the other characters and enter specific areas of the game only accessible to them instead. The benefit of this is not only do you get to enjoy new moves and magical attacks, but several of the game's more powerful magical items can only be acquired by Jubei's comrades.

When you do fight together with a friend though it's nice to know that Capcom has made a decent job of the AI. Although each character has their own style of attack – Magoichi, as the ranged-combat specialist, will try to stay back while Ekei likes to plough in as much as possible – they tend to help out by keeping the enemy off your back. And when it comes to boss battles they become a great diversion, allowing you to pull off a range of sneak attacks unnoticed.

The only real complaint about the system is its inconsistency. One minute an ally will join you in



GONE FOR A SLASH The sword effects are great.

battle to help out, but move forward a screen and suddenly they disappear – move back to the first screen and it's anybody's guess as to whether or not they'll appear again. Don't get us wrong, it's nice to have the help, it's just that a little more warning as to how and when your friends might join you would have been appreciated. Despite this minor niggle, the system is a welcome addition and it adds a level of interest to the relatively calm tavern-based sections in between the meat of the game's action sections.

### TURNING JAPANESE

One of the main complaints about the original game was its simplistic and all too brief storyline and this is something that Capcom has clearly tried to address in the sequel. True, the game itself remains fairly short in terms of overall length (somewhat less than ten hours to finish the whole game on a first attempt), but the storyline has been fleshed out considerably. Several incidental characters serve important roles within the plot and all of Jubei's allies have their own stories to tell. This all serves to add extra depth to what is conceivably quite a familiar narrative.

To compensate for the fuller-figure plot, *Onimusha 2* visits several new locations, as well as a few familiar locales from the original title. In

addition to the obligatory Japanese villages and castles, Jubei can expect to find himself trudging through misty mountain paths, dank forests and dangerous gold mines among other locations. There are also a number of freakish new enemies to deal with. Of particular note are the Rotor Bugs, frustrating insect like creatures who have protective armour and lethal spinning blades, and the tree trunk-wielding pole guards, potentially abused as children they seem only to live for the prospect of crushing craniums. And like any self-respecting Capcom game, the lack of actual game-length is compensated for by a number of secret features that can only be accessed by completing the game through several times. These range from



SOUL MAN The lights are the souls of dead demons.





**SHOCKING** The lightning attack is just awesome.



**PLATFORM ACTION** Jump the boxes to reach the other side.

the obligatory galleries of production art – nice to look at but ultimately unrewarding – through to a number of bonus mini-games that involve tackling various areas of the game again under specific conditions or ploughing through a series of super-hard puzzle box problems. Although we'd prefer a lengthier quest at the end of the day, the pile of secrets on offer does ease the pain somewhat.

#### SHOULD JUBEI IT?

As an example of survival horror, *Onimusha 2* is just shy of absolute must-have status. Yes it's gorgeous to look at and thoroughly entertaining to play, but close inspection reveals it to be little



**FEELING HORSE** Jubei's steed is a robot – very odd.

more than an incredibly glitzy beat 'em-up. The development team has come so far from the creepy, atmospheric days of *Resident Evil* that *Onimusha 2* lacks any kind of scare factor – it's no longer survival horror, more all-action adventure instead, and as such it just fails to top *Devil May Cry*. Perhaps it's the contemporary setting or the slightly expanded puzzle element but *DMC* still comes over as the more fulfilling experience.

Add to that some shocking incidents of slow-down that can (very) occasionally raise their head and *Onimusha 2* just falls those two points short of a magic ten. Still, that can't distract from a top class game and one that Capcom, perhaps stung over perfectly legitimate criticism of its previous PAL conversions, has fully optimised for an Australian audience, coming complete with a sparkling 60Hz option. And if that's not recommendation enough then we don't know what is. Oh, telling you to buy it right now apparently.

/ MARK ROBINS



**STAIRWAY TO HELL** Proving that pre-rendered backdrops still cut it.

## DON'T MAKE ME ANGRY!

YOU WOULDN'T LIKE JUBEI WHEN HE'S ANGRY...

ONE OF *ONIMUSHA 2*'S NEW FEATURES IS JUBEI'S ability to transform himself into a snarling, purple fire-wielding super demon in a manner similar to Dante's demon transformation ability in *Devil May Cry* – very handy when you're surrounded on all sides by the gibbering hordes of evil and need some supernatural assistance. During the game, defeated enemies release souls that Jubei can collect to help power himself up. Collect five of these purple souls and Jubei is transformed into the invulnerable super demon. While in this state Jubei is able to inflict massive damage, but only for a limited period of time, after which he returns to normal. Ooh, you best go get 'em you big 'ol purple hunk of demony manhood.



**THE DEVIL INSIDE** Jubei, in full mad-demon mode. Scary.



**HE'S ON FIRE** The bar shows how long your demon form lasts.



**PURPLE FLAME** Woah, look at that flaming sword go!

### VERDICT

**PSW**

#### UPPERS

- Visually stunning
- Intense hack 'n slash action
- Nice comrade system
- Expands from the original

#### DOWNERS

- Far too few puzzles
- Endless fighting is repetitive
- It's still fairly short
- Occasional slow-down

**GRAPHICS** • Stunning characters and backdrops

9

**SOUND** • Swishy sword effects and decent backgrounds

8

**LIFESPAN** • Short game but there're plenty of extras

7

#### OVERALL SCORE

If slashing hordes of demons to bits is your cup of tea, *Onimusha 2* is a perfect example of the genre done well. However, a couple of niggling faults prevent this from classic status.

**8**





# HITMAN 2: SILENT ASSASSIN

IT'S A STEALTH GAME, IN CASE THE SUBTITLE DIDN'T GIVE IT AWAY.

TYPE	ACTION ADVENTURE
PLAYERS	1
OUT	NOW
DISTRIBUTOR	INFOGRAMES
PRICE	\$99.95
DEVELOPER	IO INTERACTIVE
RATED	MA 15+

FOR MONTHS NOW, HITMAN 2 HAS been the subject of many a libellous innuendo and unfounded Internet rumour. Despite the complete lack of real evidence, websites of a very questionable nature have been quite industrious in reporting on the many so-called problems that supposedly plagued Io Interactive during the game's development cycle. Everything from general staff apathy to threatened cancellations has been thrown up as fact and cited to support one general opinion: that this is a sequel that should never have been made.

Happily, however, that's bollocks – *Hitman 2* is a fine game. While it does suffer from its fair share of annoying faults, these can easily be relegated to insignificance once one has come to foster a full appreciation for Io's many laudable achievements. In fact, just to make sure that this review doesn't leave with you with any bitter aftertaste, we'll have a look at exactly what these flaws are first and then go on to detail why they can be ignored with just the right amount of perseverance. It's the only way

to be fair, you know.

Beginning with the biggest problem first, *Hitman 2*'s sporadic lack of cohesiveness can often be the cause of some very major frustrations and has the effect of continually ruining the vicarious pleasure of playing the role of paid killer. Basically it all comes down the fact that it's very difficult to accurately predict how the game's schizophrenic AI is going to react in a given circumstance. For example, enemy soldiers will often walk past you without so much as a second glance one moment and then, inexplicably, open fire without provocation the next. Given that this kind of erratic behaviour often applies to entire

missions, it becomes quite difficult to accurately assess the chance a given action has for success without actually trying said action first. This results in a game where trial and error is established as the standard procedure of progression and the reload function becomes much more important than it actually should be.

## COME AGAIN?

Compounding this issue are the annoyingly vague mission briefings, which will often go into great detail about an intended target without actually detailing how to go about killing it. One could argue that this



HAT TRICK You like how I can balance this sphere on my head?



JUST ONE MORE BARKEEP! No, I'm sorry, sir, I think you've had enough...





further enhances the game's focus on freeform play mechanics, but that's misleading because those freeform mechanics are actually illusionary. Sure, it's theoretically possible to complete missions in any realistically feasible manner – but that rarely happens in practice. What does happen is that the player usually ends up choosing between two or three pre-defined courses of action because, as was mentioned above, it's simply too hard to accurately forecast how the game is going to react to any plans otherwise.

If I had compensated for this by filling out the game's mission briefings with a bit more detail, then this wouldn't be too big a problem. They didn't, however, and what we're left with as a result are missions where the player must constantly grope for the 'right way' to do things via a series of repetitive experiments that are far from enjoyable to conduct. So yes: if you're the type that habitually breaks joypads out of frustration (*He speaks from experience – Ed*), then perhaps you should consider a game that isn't quite so frustrating as *Hitman 2* tends to be.

But that's enough of putting the boot in – it's time

to talk about why *Hitman 2* is a game that you'll probably like regardless of its many foibles. The first and most obvious thing that comes to mind is just how incredibly stylish the whole experience is. The game's protagonist, Agent 47, is just so amazingly engaging that it's hard to resist being ensnared by the charm with which he carries out his cold-hearted exploits. It sounds revoltingly macabre, but sneaking up on people and strangling them with fibre wire is really good fun – especially if you can steal their clothes when you're done.

#### BLAH BLAH BLAH

The charisma isn't just cosmetic either. After the exhaustive experimentation is complete and the correct means to murder are ascertained, actually pulling off a job successfully is extremely satisfying simply because it's so damn cool. All the repetition and constant reloading notwithstanding, you'll want to keep playing *Hitman 2* because you know there's a good amount of fun to be had – it's just a matter of finding the correct path to it. The ends justify the

## /IT'S HARD TO RESIST BEING ENSNARED BY AGENT 47'S CHARM/

means as old Machiavelli used to say, and in this case he's very much in the right.

On the audio/visual side of the blood-soaked spectrum, *Hitman 2* is quite splendid indeed. Huge environments, skeletally animated character models and music to die for (or kill to, as the case may be) combine to form an aesthetic experience that complements the titles underlying gameplay perfectly. It doesn't look much better than its PC predecessor, mind, but that's hardly anything to complain about. Anyone who's played the original knows just how good it looked, and this is sequels definitely continues that tradition.

*Hitman 2* is a good game. Despite its flaws and its hiccups, it is an addictive and stylish title that is quite unlike anything else available for the PlayStation2. Constantly restarting a level just so you can successfully garrote a waiter for his attire may not seem like a fun experience, but it is and it is definitely one that I recommend that you don't miss out on.

/ DANIEL STAINES

## I WANT MY FUGU!

Just as there's more than one way to skin a cat, there's more than one way to kill a man – a fact thoroughly evidenced in *Hitman 2*. Those of you not content with the traditional method of slaughter entailed by a silenced pistol or handy garrote will be delighted to know that *Hitman 2* offers a wide variety of creative options to go about silencing your enemies. In one mission, for example, it's actually possible to kill your target by tricking him into eating poisoned fugu fish. Aficionados of *The Simpsons* will know that fugu is the fish Homer ate in the episode where he thought he was going to die but didn't. We don't know if the fugu in *Hitman 2* is some kind of tribute to *The Simpsons*, but it's certainly nice to think so.



VERDICT		PSW
UPPERS	DOWNERS	
- Amazingly stylish	- Trial and error gameplay	
- Visually stunning	- Vague mission briefs	
- Cool atmosphere	- Erratic AI	
- Utterly unique fun	- Similar to original	
GRAPHICS	- Crisp, expansive and atmospheric	8
SOUND	- Excellent musical score and passable voice acting	7
LIFESPAN	- Moderately long, but fairly low on the replay value	7
OVERALL SCORE		7
A very good game. If it weren't for its irritating design flaws, <i>Hitman 2</i> would've been a classic.		





RUNNING MAN Wracked by guilt yet glad to still be alive.



ALONE IN THE DARK He likes that damn flamethrower, doesn't he?

# THE THING

DAY 37 IN THE BIG BROTHER HOUSE – THIS MORNING ALEX TURNED OUT TO BE AN ALIEN IN DISGUISE AND MURDERED EVERYONE.

TYPE	ACTION ADVENTURE
PLAYERS	1
OUT	NOW
DISTRIBUTOR	VIVENDI
PRICE	\$99.95
DEVELOPER	COMPUTER ART
RATED	MA15+
SEE IT ON DVD	
/ Paranoia spread thick / You're laughing at me now / He hates me, I can tell / I can't trust you....	

## ANYBODY WHO'S WOKEN UP AFTER

enjoying a heavy night on the booze will know that appearances can be deceiving – for instance, was that really a babe you pulled last night or behind the rosy tint of exceptionally thick beer goggles was she just some horribly disfigured leper in disguise? And what about space aliens? They're pretty deceptive creatures too. E.T. may have looked like a disease-riddled Redfern sewer escapee but he was actually a shy and sensitive creature. The aliens in John Carpenter's classic sci-fi movie *The Thing* however, now they're something else entirely. One minute they look like your best friend, the next they turn into a gibbering pile of amorphous flesh intent on ripping your arms off.

The idea of making a game based on such a paranoid film might have seemed laughable at first, but, like the deceptive alien itself, *The Thing* is a surprising little package that far surpasses expectations. Picking up where the film finishes

(no Kurt Russell unfortunately), you take the role of Captain Blake, a marine sent to investigate the events within the American and Norwegian science bases deep in the Antarctic. As Blake you must piece together the evidence you find while constantly being on guard for appearances of the Thing itself because, as fans of the film will remember, it could be anywhere...

## DO PEOPLE THINK I'M PARANOID?

Taking its lead from *Resident Evil* and *Silent Hill*, *The Thing* is survival horror with the emphasis firmly on action. Grenades, shotguns, machine guns, flamethrowers and sniper rifles – all can be collected and put to use as you hunt down the morphing space creature. You're going to need them all though as each of the game's many multi-objective levels is packed with aliens to gun and burn down, usually both in equal measure.

Helpfully though you're not on your own as throughout the game you'll have your own team of

men to command and it's this squad concept that separates *The Thing* from similar titles. Each member of your team has a specific profession – soldiers pack greater firepower, medics heal your wounds, engineers fix broken machinery – and each can be given simple orders such as 'stay put' and 'follow me'. Not that your soldiers run on blind faith however, as each character within the game has their own specific personality. When things gets rough and the corpses start piling up, some start to panic and run, even go crazy and blow their own heads off. Likewise some won't trust you, often suspecting you to be infected. By carrying out the correct actions, say giving a dubious character a gun or leading a panicked character out of a combat situation, you can maintain your team's trust and keep them calm. Do the wrong thing however, like pointing a gun at a scared man's head and you're more than likely to have a team of flipped out marines on your hand as well as a rampaging alien threat.

It's a clever system and one that keeps you on your toes throughout. If you were wondering how the paranoia of the film could possibly be ported

## TRUST NO ONE!

DISCOVER WHO THE ALIENS ARE BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE.

The alien impostors in the film were found out thanks to a handy blood test and the game is no different. Remember to test out anybody who claims to be a friend. You'll quickly know whether to trust them or fill them full of flames.



STEP ONE "Excuse me, sir, you're not an alien, are you?"

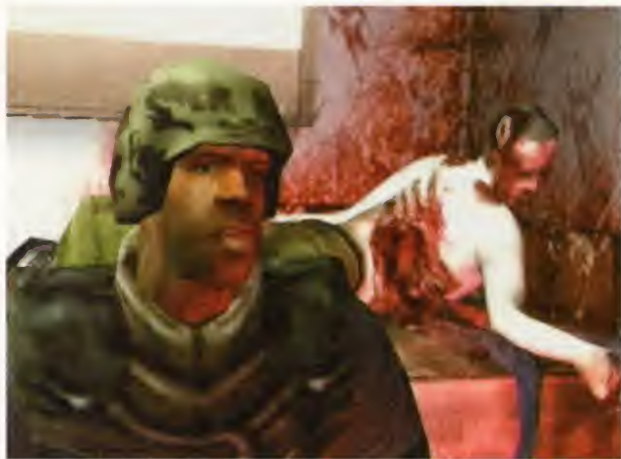


STEP TWO Shoot first, conduct blood tests later.



STEP THREE Gloat about your alien sensors.





**BEHIND YOU!** Chest-busting aliens make a welcome return.



**SKI BUNNIES** The blue bar depicts the degree of hypothermia.



**VENT YOUR ANGER** A mouth like that is a dentist's dream.



**/ THE  
SETTINGS  
WITHIN THE  
GAME ARE  
EXCELLENT  
RECREATIONS  
OF THE  
FILM'S  
ORIGINAL  
LOCATIONS /**

across to the game then the squad system manages it with ease. As men join and leave your team you'll always have to live with the possibility that someone could be infected, ready to start attacking your fellow squad members.

The settings within the game are excellent recreations of the film's original locations: blizzard filled snowscapes, blood-soaked autopsy rooms and the eerily empty common room of the Norwegian camp are all immediately recognisable. Similarly the Thing itself is recreated in all its gory glory, from the tiny walking head creatures to the full-on human-imitating fiends themselves. It's to the developer's credit that the atmosphere of the film has been so faithfully recreated.

#### THINGS THAT MAKE YOU GO GRRR...

However, *The Thing* does have a few irritating flaws that stop it from being a truly magnificent game. First of all, the creeping sense of paranoia is steadily replaced throughout the game by a

realisation that too much of the story is scripted. You can test your squad mates for infection and they'll get the all-clear, only to transform into an alien minutes later because the tight script demands it. It's frustrating, defies logic and dims the suspense. And while there are some interesting puzzle elements that require you to give specific orders to your men (plus some clever remote camera posers) you can't help but feel that the whole squad system has been underused.

Another gripe is the controls; there are too many members in the team, meaning every single button on the pad is used for something different. With practice you'll begin to master it, but the first hour is seemingly spent reading through pop-up tutorial messages helping you to get to grips with it all.

Not major problems agreed, but they do add up to a slight lack of polish on what is essentially an entertaining extension of the film. There's still a much lengthier challenge than the norm for survival horror games and an abundance of

amusing things to look out for within the base, like vomit-inducing corpses. Fans of the film won't be disappointed and that's an achievement in itself.

**/ MARK ROBINS**

#### VERDICT

**PSW**

##### UPPERS

- Stays faithful to the film
- Squad system is novel
- Gruesome enemies
- Refreshingly long challenge

##### DOWNERS

- Some iffy scripting in places
- Fiddly controls
- Where's Kurt Russell?
- Squad system underused

##### GRAPHICS

• Nice levels and gruesome aliens

**8**

##### SOUND

• Good if sparse sound effects

**7**

##### LIFESPAN

• Lots of levels to play through and explore

**8**

##### OVERALL SCORE

A surprisingly entertaining expansion of the classic John Carpenter sci-fi horror movie, which successfully captures the tense atmosphere of the film. Mmm, paranoia...

**8**



**STEP FOUR** Lock up your other companions for their own good.



**STEP FIVE** So that when this happens, they won't harm you.



**STEP SIX** Roast your former friends for dinner. Yum.





OPEN UP AND SAY AAH No trip to the dentist was ever quite like this.

# PROJECT ZERO

DARTING OUT OF THE SHADOWS TO SHRIEK "BOO!" IN A SILLY VOICE, HERE COMES THE SCARIEST GAME EVER MADE. OFFICIALLY.



TYPE	HORROR ADVENTURE
PLAYERS	1
OUT	NOW
DISTRIBUTOR	TAKE 2
PRICE	\$99.95
DEVELOPER	TECMO
RATED	MA15+

IF GAMES ARE MEANT TO BE FUN, THEN *Project Zero* should be a very poor game indeed. It's not fun; it's a sweaty palm, peering between half-shut eyelids, shivers down the spine, chilled to the bone nightmare. Play it alone at night and you'll be jumping at the slightest unaccounted for sound, freaking out as shadows dance in your peripheral vision, and holding your breath in case something might hear you. It's definitely an intense experience, but it certainly couldn't be considered fun.

Nonetheless *Project Zero* (aka *Fatal Frame*) is

one of the best games of the year, toppling its genre rivals to stand at the pinnacle of survival horror. If *Resident Evil* succeeded through visceral shocks and *Silent Hill* through psychological terror, then *Project Zero* usurps them both with a breathless combination of creeping fear and macabre horror. Like *Silent Hill 2* it forces you to pause and question everything you see. Yet it doesn't so much tear the fabric of reality than insidious eats away at it until you can no longer comprehend what's real and what isn't. Rows of tiny Japanese dolls assume an irrational demonic menace. Innocuous racks of over-sized kimonos appear as hellish spectres. But it's just your mind playing tricks. It's just *Project Zero* having fun with you.

Initially it seems to subscribe to the genre's conventions: there's a vulnerable young girl

exploring a deserted, isolated mansion. You play the role of Miku Hinusaki, a young girl searching for her lost brother Mafuyu, who was last seen entering the mansion after a horror author and his editing team disappeared there some time previously (see panel). It's night when you arrive, the front door shuts firmly behind you, and then the nightmare begins.

Upon entering the house, the psychic Miku suffers a disturbing flashback vision in which the ghost of a strange woman captures her brother. After recovering from the vision Miku finds her brother's camera – a gift from their mother – and a trail of scattered notes, hastily made by the terrified author and his team, detailing a sinister ritual in which ropes are used to dismember sacrificed victims. From then on it's up to Miku to discover the



ROPE BURN The mystery centres around these ancient rope rituals.



MIND-WARPING Ghosts arrive with these nice shimmery effects.



F\*\*\*! A shot like this would look lovely hanging over the fireplace.



BEHIND YOU! Gorgeous in-game cut-scenes like this one pepper the action.



## O BROTHER WHERE ART THOU?

Setting the scene in exquisite fashion is a short sequence where you play as Miku's brother, Mafuyu. Shot in stunning sepia-toned black-and-white, this episode depicts the events leading up to Miku's journey to the house and also serves as a neat tutorial in the use of the camera. Now if only you could play the whole game in black-and-white.



fate of her brother and the research team, and to finally unravel the mystery of the house.

At approximately this point in any other game you'd be reaching for your trusty shotgun, finger on the trigger and primed to put a shell through the head of the imminent attackers. But *Project Zero* doesn't let you do that. Instead of pockets stuffed full of guns and ammo, Tecmo presents a somewhat more plausible inventory situation in which you find yourself equipped with but a camera. However it's not just any old camera, it's a valuable family heirloom possessed of special mystical powers. Still, it's hardly likely to inspire the same kind of confidence as the comforting embrace of a bolt-action rifle. Yet there isn't a single recognisable weapon to collect throughout the entire game. It's the camera or nothing.

Ultimately this is a good thing. As luck would have it, the only enemies you encounter are ghosts. There is an old superstition that when you have your photo taken the camera steals your soul. Utter garbage of course, but in every legend there's always a hint of truth and, if a camera can steal the soul from a living person, then think of the damage it could do to the wandering soul of a ghost. For those not keen on thinking, let me just say that's a lot of damage provided you know how to use the camera properly (see panel).

### PUTTING SOULS TO REST

The old mansion is crawling (quite literally in some cases) with restless spirits, hostile or otherwise. As soon as Miku comes into contact with anything ghostlike a small gauge begins to flash on screen and the control pad starts to pulse in an unnervingly realistic, heartbeat-esque manner. Yet while Miku can sense the paranormal, she can't necessarily see it and that's where the camera comes into play.

Using the camera causes the game to shift to a first-person perspective and anything supernatural that was invisible before is suddenly revealed thanks to the mystical energies hidden within the camera (a cheap disposable this is certainly not). It's fantastically unnerving to step into a seemingly empty room only to discover via the lens it's actually filled with hidden clues, trapped souls and malevolent ghosts. Worse, at least for those with a weak heart, the first-person view is deliberately narrow and ponderous to move. As such it conveys an intense and highly convincing sense of claustrophobia that adds a further layer of tension to an already nerve-shredding atmosphere. Complaints about the unresponsive controls in this context are missing the point completely – it's all about heightening the feeling of vulnerability.

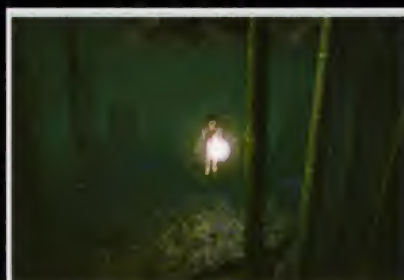
Roughly half of the ghostly apparitions you encounter are dangerous. Several former victims of

the house still haunt the corridors and they're out to drag anybody they meet alive back down to hell with them. The only way to defeat them is to say "Cheese!" and quickly snap them, thereby sapping away their very soul. By getting closer to the ghost and letting the camera charge up between shots you're able to inflict more damage, but the more sinister the ghost the more difficult this becomes as the sneaky spirits think nothing of disappearing and reappearing behind you. Compared to the cautious pace, these short-sharp-shock combat sequences, for want of a better phrase, are charged with a knife-edge suspense that serves to deepen your hesitancy while exploring the building. The manner in which *Project Zero* continually f\*\*\*s with your mind is due in large part to this relentless sense that something horrible is always just about to happen.

Away from the action, the remaining ethereal residents are there to give clues to the various puzzles or offer a glimpse into the dark history of the mansion. In terms of solving the puzzles, it's a clever method of sidestepping the usual "find the key"



NORTHERN LIGHTS Ok, now this isn't good...



TORCH THE PLACE Just burn it down and forget about the plot.





## PHOTO ALBUM

Each photo you take is stored in a memory buffer and can be saved into your own album during the game. We've created two albums so far: one features the scariest close-ups of the ghosts we've defeated, the other is a resting place for all the friendly spirits we've released from their undead torment. We're nice like that, you see.



CREEKY BRIDGE Why did Mafuyu pick such an eerie night to enter the mansion?



## /SNAPPING SHOTS OF GHOSTS REWARDS YOU WITH MORE THAN CLUES, YOU GET A CHANCE TO LIVE A LITTLE LONGER/

malarkey this type of game typically entails. Of course, many of the puzzles do fall into this category, but the way you solve them with the camera breathes new life into an otherwise tired mechanic.

Snapping shots of ghosts rewards you with more than clues, story fragments and the chance to live a little longer. You gain points depending on the quality of your shot composition – basically, the closer and scarier the ghost looks in the photo, the more points you receive. Once enough points are accumulated you can spend them on upgrading the camera in numerous ways to increase its ghost-capturing abilities. You can also save your favourite snaps in a photo album (see panel).

As bizarre as it may sound, *Project Zero's* camera

system works perfectly. The ghosts appear suddenly and with alarming regularity and if their gruesome appearance doesn't cause alarm (the 'blind' ghost – a woman who died after having her eyes plucked out – is a particularly harrowing apparition), their howling and pitiful cries certainly will.

### OTHERWORLDLY ODDITIES

The moody, dark environments – Miku's torch often providing the only illumination in each room – are superb and effortlessly convey the requisite touched-by-evil atmosphere, ably backed up by a sinister score of scratchy, wailing, ambient noise. Graphically it's far superior to *Silent Hill 2*, while the soundtrack is at least on a par with Konami's

otherworldly masterpiece. Either way, this is one gorgeous looking and sounding videogame.

In terms of pace the game cannot be faulted either: grainy, black-and-white cut-scenes relay a continually mounting level of tension as Miku uncovers more of the house's grim past, and shock moment after shock moment means that the uneasy feeling never lets up. Of particular note is the game's subtle direction, always distracting and sidetracking the player so when the shock moment does come it's even less suspected and all the more terrifying for it – horror film directors should take note. Some of the camera angles, pans, tilts, and dollies are so sublimely crafted as to be frightening in themselves, even without anything



PETRIFIED PORCELAIN This image above left is David's new desktop wallpaper.





**I SEE DEAD PEOPLE** Miku's got a ghost in her sights. Just a bit to the left and... "Cheese!"



**TWISTED TORMENT** Not all of the house's residents are hostile. This is one of the more friendly ones.

actually happening onscreen.

So while the premise and appearance of this survival horror title may seem time-honoured, the experience is without doubt a step up in terms of both appearance and scare-factor. It even gets the controls right for once, abandoning the stilted rotate-and-move method we've endured since the first *Resident Evil* (and still suffer in *Onimusha 2*) in favour of a vastly improved, intuitive camera-relative setup. Better, keep holding the analog stick in the direction you wish to move and Miku will keep heading in that direction despite changes in the camera perspective. No more turning in circles or stumbling into walls whenever the view switches around. Phew.

Indeed, in every respect, *Project Zero* never fails to impress. So, just turn off the lights, close the curtains, play on your own and prepare to be scared silly. Just remember you're not supposed to be having fun.

/ DAVID WILDOOSE



**GUIDED BY VOICES** Once apparent, the ghosts wail and shriek to put goosebumps all over your body.

## WHO YOU GONNA CALL?

### SOMEONE ARMED WITH A CAMERA APPARENTLY

CATCHING GHOSTS ON FILM HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE ultimate prize for the makers of *Fortean Times* and those crap supernatural documentaries narrated by Leonard Nimoy. However, in *Project Zero* it's all part of a day's work. As you're going to be seeking out the supernatural, just how do you go about killing ghosts with nothing but a humble reel of Kodak Gold?



**I CAN SEE IT, COMING IN THE AIR TONIGHT** A ghost has been spotted and by the looks of things it's out for blood – more specifically, your blood. Time to whip out your trusty spook camera.



**GREY MIST** The ghosts rapidly flit about and phase in and out of vision but catch them straight on in your targeting sight and they'll hopefully soon be dead. For the second time.



**LENS SCARE** A few quick snaps later and the pesky ghost is well and truly learnt. Just don't forget to develop the shots and send them to your relatives as Christmas cards.

## PSW

UPPERS	DOWNERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scary as hell</li> <li>• Cool camera concept</li> <li>• Intuitive controls</li> <li>• No guns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It's all over too quickly</li> <li>• Some mundane puzzles</li> <li>• Average voice acting</li> <li>• No guns?</li> </ul>
<b>GRAPHICS</b> • Amazing ghosts and as creepy as you'd wish.	9
<b>SOUND</b> • Moody music and sepulchral SFX.	9
<b>LIFESPAN</b> • Too short, but replay to get all the ghosts.	8



## REVIEW

NEED FOR SPEED: HOT PURSUIT 2



DUST TO DUST The outback course is particularly good.



CAREFUL NOW "Mildred, did you hear something just then?"



DESERTED Don't expect Burnout levels of traffic in NFS.

# NEED FOR SPEED: HOT PURSUIT 2

ARCADE RACING WITH HOURS OF CRAZY ACTION – JUST WHAT WE NEEDED.

TYPE	DRIVING
PLAYERS	1-2
OUT	NOW
DISTRIBUTOR	ELECTRONIC ARTS
PRICE	\$99.95
DEVELOPER	ELECTRONIC ARTS
RATED	G
SEE IT ON DVD	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>/ Robbers being naughty</li> <li>/ Cops catching robbers</li> <li>/ Robbers getting away</li> <li>/ Bits with no cops or robbers</li> </ul>	

### NONE OF US LIKED THIS WHEN IT

first came in. We were disappointed – it seemed slow and stodgy compared to its obvious competition, such as the traffic-heavy *Burnout 2* or even the gorgeous-but-slightly-pointless *Gran Turismo Concept*. But it's grown on us. It's still nothing *really* special, understand, and for many (often quite petty) reasons we find ourselves strangely determined not to like it. But it's grown on us. It's fun.

That's the key, of course, because looked at objectively there's little to recommend *Need For Speed* ahead of any other driving game. The first thing players notice are the reasonably attractive visuals, and sadly the second thing they spot is

the way they get less attractive at times of heavy action. Mr Slowdown is a close friend of *NFS*, sadly, and it's bad enough to intrude. Even at the best of times it's slightly jerky, but once you get used to it you notice less. You're unlikely to lose control because of it, but it does rather spoil the illusion.

It's a well detailed illusion, too, with smoke from forest fires and dust torn up by twisters actually affecting your driving: you can't see where you're going, leading to some entertainingly anxious seconds. Hitting bushes and cacti raises a storm of leaves and debris too, and because successful drivers spend such a lot of time cutting corners or storming right off the road entirely, it's an effect that gets seen a lot. It's lucky it's attractive, then. Adding to the sense of chaos is a range of other particle effects, such as sparks, smoke and dust thrown up by opposing cars as they clatter barriers, each other and you with admirable verve. It makes the tracks feel pleasantly alive, dispelling

some rather sterile vibes from elsewhere.

So there you are, admiring the solid-looking car models and all the fluttering damage that can be wrought with them, and along comes one of those things that makes you want to dislike it. Sterile? The handling's not going to be to everyone's taste. In fairness, there's a decent variety of control traits spread across the different models, so not all of them feel stodgy, but steady understeer is a big feature here. Certain cars – such as the rear-engined Porsche 911, incongruously – are almost totally reluctant to oversteer, and tend to plough tiresomely from one barrier to another like some kind of monolithic pinball. A bit of skill (and not a little effort) and you can get it pointing where you want it, but new gamers may just find it annoying. And that's strange, as otherwise this game is perfectly suited to those who just want a quick blast and some fun. Learn the tracks, set up way early for corners, master the handbrake and it soon becomes entertaining though, and most players will quickly learn to pull off huge drifts.

### WHEN DRIVERS ATTACK

The tracks help. Besides looking good, they offer unusually long laps – up to three minutes – and tons of sneaky shortcuts. These range from being able to go the other side of an obstacle for a better line into the next corner to full on shrubby excursions, and even, amusingly, shortcuts branching off the shortcuts. Learning the best route is as important as the best line in this game, and it can be the difference between winning and



LEAVING THE SCENE A reactive environment adds spice to it all.



## HE'S CRASHED, HE'S CRASHED!

THE TWO-PLAYER 'YOU'RE THE COP' MODE IS PURE WACKIEST POLICE CHASES-STYLE HILARITY. BUT WITHOUT THE ANNOYING MORALISING.



**CHOPPER COPPER** Officer Williams calls in another air strike; Art Director Zammit loses it and hits a car.



**RTA!** Officer W goes for a head-on stop. The perp must be detained! Zammit spangs off and keeps going.



**NEVER TAKE ME ALIVE** Zammit takes to the air as the cop tries to spin him out. The judge won't look kindly on this.



**THAT STINGS** Brave Officer Williams deploys a spike strip; Zammit's tyres are shredded! I am the law!



**YOU'RE GOING DOWN** Don't just book him! He's shown no remorse and should be given a fair trial, then executed.



MOVING IMAGES Italian cars are just plain better.



## / IT FEELS STRANGELY LIKE A RALLY GAME... HUGE SLIDES AND CRAZY JUMPS ARE KEY /

losing. In fact, *Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit 2* feels strangely like a rally game, as huge slides and crazy jumps are the key to success... and the reason why it's fun. Big leaps even reward you with a slo-mo, surface-to-air shot of your car, which works well. The *Matrix*-style camera swirl works less well. In fact, it stinks. Developers: stop it!

Then, of course, there's the Hot Pursuit. Ironically this is one of the most disappointing aspects, as the police drivers are useless. After tailgating you for a bit, they pull alongside and simply force you into a wall until you both grind to a halt. You can't even outbrake them – there's nothing you can do if they want to stop you, and that's frustrating. The helicopters are more entertaining, dropping bouncing explosive barrels in front of you, and road blocks with tyre-deflating stingers at least present an obstacle you can avoid with a bit of quick thinking, apart from when they're hidden over a brow, that is. Happily, both

the police and your opponents can hit (or be forced to hit) barrels and stinger strips themselves. Even more happily, it's possible to play two-player cop versus racer and deploy these weapons yourself. Most entertaining. But be thankful pursuit doesn't feature in the main mode, despite that title.

The mix of over-the-top, rally style driving allied to open roads (although even the densest level of traffic is particularly feeble) and recognisable, often highly desirable cars is probably what makes this entertaining. Otherwise there's nothing original here: not for a driving game, and not even really for a *NFS* game. We feel as if we shouldn't like something that doesn't really try to bring anything new to the driving experience. But it's fun.

/ STEVEN WILLIAMS



SMOG Visibility can fall dramatically at certain points. Fear it!

VERDICT		PSW
UPPERS	DOWNERS	
• Great car selection	• Some ugly slowdown	
• Long, entertaining tracks	• Same old <i>NFS</i> prescription	
• Tons of shortcuts	• Stupid <i>Matrix</i> effects	
• Loads of breakable stuff	• Crappy police AI	
GRAPHICS	• Detailed and solid looking, but a bit chuggy	7
SOUND	• Full of big name nu-metal. Like?	6
LIFESPAN	• Lots to unlock, funny two-player game	8
OVERALL SCORE		6
Not as polished as we'd like, but a laugh anyway. Get into the patented <i>NFS</i> handling – and unlock faster cars – and the chaos is highly entertaining. Definitely worth a try.		





# TUROK EVOLUTION

BIG WEAPONS, BIG ENEMIES AND BIG LEVELS CAN'T HIDE SOME FAIRLY MAJOR FLAWS.

TYPE	SHOOTER
PLAYERS	1-4
OUT	NOW
DISTRIBUTOR	ACCLAIM
PRICE	\$99.95
DEVELOPER	ACCLAIM AUSTIN
RATED	M15+

**TUROK EVOLUTION REPRESENTS** both an evolution of the four-adventure strong series (the previous three titles appeared on the PC and N64) and an evolution of the first-person action genre in general. Where the other *Turok*'s were renown for their straightforward gameplay with exaggerated weapons, enemies and action, *Evolution* features some of the key elements which enrich the FPS experience that other recent exemplars of the genre (*Timesplitters 2*, anyone?) have put forward.

The result is a shooter that covers all bases — heck, there's even a sneakin' sequence. However, for all you *Turok* nuts, the series' basic formula of Lone

Indian Warrior Fights Hordes of Large Reptilian Creatures with Weapons from Hell remains unchanged. Don't feel abandoned yet.

*Turok* is about Big. Developed at Acclaim Studios in Austin, Texas, the recurring "over-the-top" theme of the previous *Turok* adventures has remained intact for this outing. The things you shoot at are Big. The levels you traverse are Big. And by golly, the guns you tote and their effects are just Massive. Of the arsenal presented there is a handful of distinctly new toys on offer, complementing the traditional *Turok* array (the warclub, bow, pistol, shotgun, rocket launcher, et al). There's the Gravity Disruptor, which while not dealing any direct damage, is satisfying nonetheless as it sends victims flying off in all directions (best used near cliffs and valleys), and the nifty Spider Mine, after which the game's view is positioned to chase cam where the player can guide the mine into enemy territory and select one of three functions — detonate, lure, or gas. There's also the inspired Swarm Bore — a weapon that fires hyper-glow borers into an enemy's body, severing them limb by limb. All in all, the weapons are a gas to use, with the less technologically advanced ones on offer early in the adventure being supplemented with the more fantastical stuff as the story progresses.

And then there's the bird. A new weapon and a

new gameplay mode in one, Turok now takes to the sky in various stages throughout his adventure. Armed with a machine gun and guided missiles, the Quetzalcoatlus sequences offer a combination of dogfighting and bombing raids against your foes. Similar in spirit to *Jedi Starfighter*, this new element to *Turok* is a welcome diversion — however Acclaim would have done better to make it more forgiving as players adjusted to the fine control necessary. The learning curve here is quite frustratingly steep.

## CLIMB EVERY MOUNTAIN

Each of the 15 chapters on offer in *Evolution* are further broken down into smaller, more emotion engine-friendly maps. However, size here is a relative term; what these maps may lack in absolute distance from point A to point B, they more than make up for in depth. The environments usually scale vertically much more so than they do horizontally, resulting in some spectacular vistas and some interesting player routes (and, from this, "terrain puzzles"). Coupled with a striking attention to game art and terrain detail — lush settings, animations, swaying flora and a decent population of local fauna — *Evolution*'s atmosphere at times is breathtaking. Indeed, Acclaim aimed at imparting the sense of being in the wild and on the hunt, and it has succeeded admirably. Even the



PHALLIC SYMBOL The way he carries it suggests an extension of...



## TUROK WHO?



As is in vogue with sequels these days, the latest in the *Turok* series is actually set prior to the events featured in *Turok: Dinosaur Hunter*, *Turok 2: Seeds of Evil*, and *Turok 3: Shadow of Oblivion*. *Evolution* tells the story of how Tal'Set, a native American Indian living during the turn of the 19th century finds himself whisked from Earth to the Lost World and earns his title of Turok, the Dinosaur Hunter. And you wondered why he doesn't smile much in photos.



**CORNERED** He's not long for this world.



**UP, UP AND AWAY** Get some air with the flying bits.



**TAL'SET'S GOT A PET** Perhaps the most irritating enemy's ever.

musical score complements the scene – the usual rousing tunes of the genre give way here at times to more eerie, moody themes. Fantastic stuff!

However, that's where the mastery displayed by Acclaim loses its sheen. While the levels have been beautifully designed from a visual standpoint, there are some weaknesses encountered when it comes to



**IN A BAD LIGHT** Tal'Set wisely saves his biggest guns for those nasty chandeliers.



**CUT SOME RUG** This primitive whipper-snipper proved effective in taming such troublesome weeds.

## / WEAPON THAT FIRES INTO AN ENEMY'S BODY, SEVERING THEM LIMB BY LIMB /

the puzzles displayed within. Firstly, *Evolution* regresses back to archaic "find the key" puzzles. Little effort has been made to conceal their simplistic nature with scripted events, and the results are uninspiring. Secondly, it seems stuck in the prehistoric age with a liberal use of jumpy-jumpy sequences in many of the more vertically sheer levels. Two things here prevent forgiveness – the fact that the jumpy-jumpy paths are usually well obscured, and the absolutely shite "auto mantle" feature. The auto-mantle has a relatively large engage area, which spells disaster in the many tighter jumpy-jumpy areas of the game. *Turok: Crap Mountain Climber*, anyone?

### DUMB HELP

Also, the much touted Squad Dynamics System leaves something to be desired. While a positive thing overall – especially considering that Turok now fights with allies in some levels – the enemies still routinely trip up and present themselves as sitting ducks. Given that other shooters have set the example by virtually ironing-out their AI bugs, anything less is to the experience's detriment.

*Turok Evolution* is, on the whole, a competent and enjoyable shooter. A lot of effort has been made to provide the basic elements of an action fest, and the



**KABOOM** And other, equally generic explosion noises.



**DARK AND STORMY NIGHT** He stood on the burning deck...

results are compelling enough to see any action fan through the adventure. The weapons are fun to use, and the missions varied enough. Where it falls down is in its lack of focus in design: the squad-based AI hasn't been exploited, or perfected enough, nor has Acclaim managed to avoid the age-old bad-puzzle design traps.

Still, for sheer action and eye candy, *Evolution* offers – as those rascally Texans would say – "a whole lotta bang for your buck." Viva le evolution!

/ MARCH STEPNIK

VERDICT		PSW
<b>UPPERS</b>	<b>DOWNERS</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Nasty weapons to play with</li><li>- Plenty to shoot at</li><li>- Jaw-dropping environments</li><li>- Aerial dog fights!</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Crap puzzles</li><li>- Touchy jumping controls</li><li>- Not-so-bright opponents</li><li>- An imitator</li></ul>	
<b>GRAPHICS</b>	- Considering the amount of flora, gorgeous	8
<b>SOUND</b>	- Weapons cook, score immerses	8
<b>LIFESPAN</b>	- Huge game, acceptable multiplayer	7
<b>OVERALL SCORE</b>		7
The <i>Turok</i> series has always been about carnage, and <i>Evolution</i> fails to disappoint in this department. Though not quite first-rate, it is however an immensely enjoyable second-rate shooter.		





TICKING THE BOXES Driving game staple no. 1: the ferris wheel.



RIZLA RUN Grab a Snickers from the garage. You've lost anyway.



# FERRARI F355 CHALLENGE

THE CHALLENGE IS TO ENJOY THIS MODEL MORE THAN NEED FOR SPEED'S NEWER ONES.

TYPE	DRIVING
PLAYERS	1-2
OUT	NOW
DISTRIBUTOR	SONY
PRICE	\$99.95
DEVELOPER	SEGA
RATED	G
SEE IT ON DVD	
/ Skidding on bends / Crashing into cars / Being a bit more sensible / One hard driving game	

**DIAMONDS. GORDEN TALLIS. THE** cryptic crossword in the *Herald*. March's shins. Creating a more drab, soul killing, listless and frankly laughable record than Mariah Carey's *Glitter*. All these things are considered hard to a noteworthy degree, and with good reason. And now *Ferrari F355 Challenge* joins them as an almost legendarily tough substance — but, if you look through that list again, not all of them are pleasant things of which to be on the receiving end. Not at all. And how does *F355* score on this count? It's debatable, really.

So let's have a heated debate, then. Or at least a vaguely warmed-over one. *F355 Challenge* is supposed to be as simulationy as simulation can be, so realistic it's almost like driving a real Ferrari. That's why there's only one car in it: the game's just so focused there's no room for any more. Unfortunately, this reviewer has driven a real Ferrari F355. Ah, but probably not on a racetrack! Things are different there! Yes, on a racetrack — and he never once understeered into the gravel at 20 kph. Flooring the throttle in first didn't overwhelm the massive, ultra-sticky tyres and didn't result in instant wheelspin. Flooring it also had the effect of flinging you down the track in an

appreciable way; it felt like an exotic 375bhp car, rather than a milk float. It's not the case in this game. If *F355 Challenge* is supposed to be an exactly accurate replication of the real thing, then these are regrettable flaws indeed.

And it's not as if Sega hasn't had time to correct these flaws. This game has been gathering dust in arcades since monkeys first picked up dried out femurs and skulled their enemies with them. And after the three-screen extravaganza of the 1999 original came the Dreamcast version: cute, but a lesser experience for the loss of peripheral vision that the shift to a solitary screen imposed. And now, with the Dreamcast a fading image in the hall of failed consoles, long since out of production,



BUZZZZZZ! You touched the grass. You lose. Please try again.

*F355* finally arrives on a Sony machine. And it's exactly the same game, although arguably slightly less attractive than the DC conversion. It makes no attempt to disguise its arcade roots, and no attempt to bring new content — such as new tracks or even, gasp, new Ferraris — to PS2. It was impressive once. But time moves on.

## COME IN 355, YOUR TIME IS UP

So pick a car (joke), pick a colour and get stuck into the championship. It's here you unlock the more interesting circuits, although you'll quickly realise that even the opening oval is more testing than most. Brush the wall and your car stops in half the time the brakes need. Stay away from the



CONE, BUT NOT FORGOTTEN Driving game staple no. 2: cones.



## HEAVEN'S ABOVE

PERHAPS THE MOST STRIKING THING ABOUT IT IS, IRONICALLY, THE SKY.



**DUSK** Like night, but you can see where you're going.



**NUCLEAR ARMAGEDDON** That'll be the radioactive dust.



**LOVELY DAY** Clear blue sky: you can almost lick it. Almost.



**OVERCAST** Just another day in Melbourne. Showers later.



**STICK ANOTHER HORSE ON THE GRILLE**  
No, one is quite enough for anyone.



**HARD DRIVEN** It does a good job of simulating road rage.



**GRAPHICS LIKE IT'S 1999** Tracks are sparse, cars more detailed.

wall and you're on the wrong line, losing speed. Touch the car in front – even just kiss it – and your race-bred steed heads off at some crazed, random angle. Obviously this is intended to stop you using your competitors as cushions, and to force you to learn the braking points. But it's annoying. This is a one-make series – contact is inevitable. You should be able to tuck right behind a car in a corner. But you end up so paranoid you're almost as likely to go off trying to avoid the car you've just caught as from hitting it.

Twistier circuits are even tougher. Learning and consistently hitting your braking points is absolutely critical, and there's only a very small margin for error. And if you want to win, you must hit each one right on the limit. But even if you make it down to the right speed, the fight's not

over... turn in a fraction too late or too hard and it's bye bye traction, hello failure. While the handling is an exceptionally well-balanced replication of a car on the limit at very high speed, it never weights up as the velocity drops. This means you can slide helplessly off the track at a walking pace, your tyres overwhelmed by a momentum that's simply not there. The upside is that sticking it into a high-speed corner just so is very satisfying indeed, but every movement you make is so critical it's not something you've got time to revel in. It's like juggling with Ming vases while the owner waits with a shotgun: even if you manage not to drop them, you probably won't laugh until afterwards.

The problem is that no game can give the feedback a real car provides. The dynamic here is just too knife-edged to let players cut loose, and

**/ TURN IN A FRACTION TOO LATE OR TOO HARD AND IT'S BYE BYE TRACTION, HELLO FAILURE /**

the badly implemented analogue controls hardly help. With just a few subtle audio and visual clues and perhaps a five percent margin for error, the key to success is to learn it all by rote. Memorise the tracks. Memorise the braking points. Memorise the apexes. Hit them all, lap after lap and you should win. You'll have a few satisfying moments along the way, maybe even a burst of excitement or two. But unless you really are a hardcore sim gamer – as opposed to hardcore petrolhead, because as we said, this isn't really like driving a Ferrari – you're unlikely to extract much in the way of enjoyment.

**/ STEVEN WILLIAMS**



**THIS TIME...** Maybe you'll remember the braking points this time.



**MAKE IT EASY ON YOURSELF** The driver aids add an air of autopilot.

## VERDICT

**PSW**

### UPPERS

- Incredibly testing
- Satisfying when it goes well
- Ferrari's sound great
- Drive the Fiorano test track

### DOWNERS

- More like work than play
- Offers nothing new
- Useless collision detection
- No sense of speed

**GRAPHICS** - Not bad, but quite plain and looking old

**6**

**SOUND** - Genuinely appalling music – cock rock, natch

**2**

**LIFESPAN** - Just how patient are you?

**5**

### OVERALL SCORE

F355 aims for an incredibly narrow audience. Moments of pleasure do surface, but they're drowned in frustration: is it really so accurate? No. And is it fun? We're not convinced.

**5**





# MX SUPERFLY

BIG BIKES, BIG AIR, BIG TRICKS AND BIG TRACKS. YOU MAY HAVE SEEN A DONKEY FLY BUT HAVE YOU SEEN A MOTORBIKE FLY?

TYPE	RACING
PLAYERS	1-2
OUT	NOW
DISTRIBUTOR	THQ
PRICE	\$99.95
DEVELOPER	PACIFIC COAST
RATED	GS+

SEE IT ON DVD

/ Superfly, you're gonna make your fortune by and by  
/ But if you lose don't ask no questions why...  
/ Oh, and some flying bikes

## THE FLASHY, ALL-AMERICAN

world of professional motocross is a strange beast indeed. On the one hand it's wildly entertaining, larger-than-life and packed with some of the most over-the-top aerial stunts possible. On the other hand it does tend to make you see all motorbikers as nothing more than mobile sacks of donor organs just waiting to be harvested off the floor of the accident site. You might look very cool when you're flying through the air on the back of a 250cc motorbike but miss your landing and you could be laughing on the other side of your compacted face as you spend the next six weeks in traction.

But, potentially fatal injuries aside, motocross does offer plenty of opportunity for top gaming action and THQ's latest foray into the market, *MX Superfly*, goes a fair way to recreating all the thrills and spills of the sport. Featuring over 20 well-designed courses, it's a thoroughly polished game that offers a varied set of career options, smoothly

animated graphics and a fine bike handling system. Straddling the twin worlds of dirt track racing and stunt-tabulous freestyle, *Superfly* is packed with throbbing engines, bumpy, twisting, muddy courses and a full quota of exceedingly dangerous and spectacular mid-air twists and tricks. It's standard fare for any self-respecting motocross title, but *Superfly* grabs your attention from the start with its slick execution and finely balanced drive mechanics.

## HOT CROSS FUN

Once beyond the quick fix races of exhibition mode, it's in the career mode that you'll discover the meat of the game. Here you must take your timid, first-time biker, completely kitted out in the latest designer leather gear, and put them through a series of basic races and tutorials. Rake in cash from these early forays and you'll earn the right to take part in a divisional championship. Win this and you'll get to move up to the next grade of

competition where you can garner even more money and move on to the higher classes.

Throughout, the handling of your bike is spot on. Almost every button on the pad is used in some way to give complete control over your machine. Different levels of braking can be employed to allow power-slides, the suspension can be purposefully compressed to give you extra bounce when going over jumps, and liberal amounts of clutch can be applied for that extra burst of speed on a hill climb. Learning the controls on each part of the undulating courses takes time, and coupled with the ruthless AI of the computer-controlled racers, *Superfly* offers a surprisingly steep learning curve.

There is some recompense for the tough gameplay though: a second career mode that specialises in freestyle tricks over standard racing. Here you're rated on your ability to perform stunts for points with more favourable scores allowing progression to the higher leagues. The trick





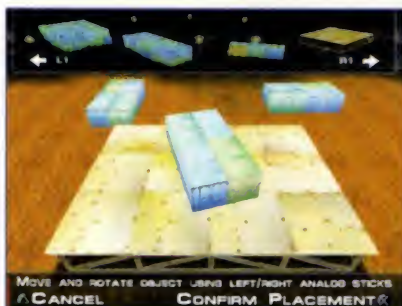
## RAMP IT UP

### IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY WILL FALL

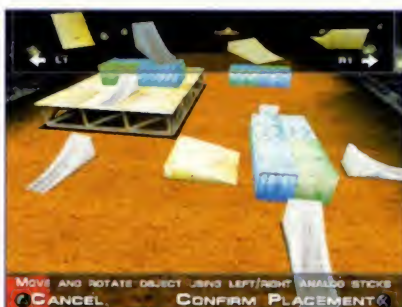
*MX Superfly's* course editor option allows you to build your own freestyle arena complete with hills and obstacles. It's a bit like when you used to make ramps out of wood and a few bricks.



/ Remember, motocross is all about dangerous jumps so bear that in mind when you approach the bare canvas of your big empty, muddy arena. Always give yourself space for large leaps...



/ Start by adding a few platforms to give your course some shape. Try to pile platforms on top of each of other for ridiculously high structures that you can race to the top and jump off.



/ Slap a couple of big ramps down next, remembering to leave plenty of space to give yourself a good run-up to hit them at top speed. Slow bikes do not make for exciting stunts.



/ Throw a few obstacles in and Bob's your mother's oldest brother. Now get out there and go catch some big air in your latest creation. It's time to play, so you better get to it dude.



## / SUPERFLY GRABS YOU FROM THE START WITH ITS SLICK EXECUTION AND FINELY BALANCED MECHANICS /

system, while not quite of *Mat Hoffman* standard, is well designed and offers a plentiful roster of stunts. But like the handling of the bike, it takes some practice, with some of the more spectacular moves requiring complicated chains of rapid button presses. Tricky in itself, there's also landing the bike to contend with, and perfect balance is called for with misplaced wheels usually resulting in neck-snappingly unpleasant accidents.

### FLY, SCORE AN EAGLE

Beyond the challenge of both career modes, *Superfly* boasts a selection of varied mini-games. These range from driving from tee to pin through a nine-hole golf course in the quickest time possible to a mad, *Crazy Taxi*-style rush through an urban jungle to deliver pizzas on time. Most of these mini-games appear as challenges within the career modes and once played become unlocked as playable options in the main menu. Fleshing these sub-levels out further still are a number of hidden secret areas, which, once found, open up even more options such as extra tracks to race on.

Although mildly entertaining, the real problem with the extra challenges is that instead of adding any value to the game they tend to distract from the main race and trick-based action. In effect, *Superfly* suffers from a slight case of substance over style. Yes, it may have plenty of 'real' motocross stars resplendent in their correct livery,

(including the return of Ricky Carmichael from *MX 2002*), but unlike other games of this ilk there seems to be no discernible difference between each of them. Likewise, the track editor option (see panel), which although initially entertaining, soon reveals itself to be woefully short of depth. And while the multiplayer mode does add an extra level of entertainment it's limited to two-player action and as a result doesn't even shine a torch to *ATV Off-Road's* group-gaming shenanigans.

But let's not detract from *Superfly's* main qualities. What we have is a surprisingly skilful motocross game that offers plenty of tricks and tracks, challenging gameplay and handling that feels just right. So, if you're the sort of person who enjoy a good dose of gravel rash, *Superfly* delivers everything you could ask for.

/ MARK ROBINS

## VERDICT

PSW

### UPPERS

- Well designed tracks
- Huge roster of tricks
- Race and Freestyle modes
- Excellent handling

### DOWNERS

- Weak selection of riders
- Superficial level editor
- Overly steep learning curve
- Some pointless sub-games

GRAPHICS • Well animated riders, varied tracks

7

SOUND • Throaty engine roar and banal rock music

7

LIFESPAN • Two career modes and loads of secrets to find

8

### OVERALL SCORE

*Superfly* is an entertaining if extremely tricky racer with a good stunt mode to boot. The career modes and wide range of sub-games should keep the fans of two wheels amused.

7



## REVIEW

METROPOLIS MANIA/ KELLY SLATER'S PRO SURFER



PLANNED CITY Like Canberra, only without the porn shops.

TALK OF THE TOWN Looks like they're being kept happy.

PEDESTRIAN Singular, since he's the only one visible.

# METROPOLIS MANIA

WITH HIS GARISH YELLOW SUIT AND OVERSIZED TOP HAT, HE'S THE MOST UNLIKELY GAME HERO IN YEARS. EVERYBODY, MEET THE METROPOLIS MAKER.

TYPE	CITY SIM
PLAYERS	1
OUT	NOW
DISTRIBUTOR	UBISOFT
PRICE	\$99.95
DEVELOPER	NATSUME
RATED	G

**THE SIMS IS HERE ON PS2. WELL,** not quite. The genuine article – you know, the one that's actually called *The Sims* – won't be here for some months yet, but in the meantime there's *Metropolis Mania*. It's the closest thing there is to *The Sims* without, strictly speaking, being *The Sims*.

So we have a simulation in which you plan an entire city and attempt to keep its population happy by ensuring each individual's wants and desires are given the attention they demand. Yet Japanese developer Natsume has imbued *Mania* with several quirky ideas that elevate its creation above mere clone status. Think of it as a Super Happy Yellow Trousers Shopping SimCity kind of experience. Then slap on a big wide grin, sit back and enjoy it.

You play the Metropolis Maker, he of the yellow trousers and top hat. You've been assigned the weighty responsibility of restoring joy to the people of Earth by building them the happiest town in the world and teaching them the value of communication.



CROSSROADS Cars are rarely sighted, but the roads keep coming.

Hence you're equipped with Quirky Idea #1: a piece of magic chalk with which you designate roads. Soon after people will begin applying to live in your town. They'll automatically pick a block of land and start building, but a shrewd Metropolis Maker will select a spot for them. It's a good idea to keep your town tightly planned for reasons I shall detail later.

But first, Quirky Idea #2. You're also equipped with a mobile phone with which you can call people once you've become friends. This involves visiting each home or shop, chatting with everyone to discover their personality, and even giving them presents. Maintaining such friendship is important because it means they'll recommend your town to their friends, and so your population builds.

Once your population reaches a certain level, residents will start complaining about the lack of various facilities. Through talking to your friends, you can find someone with the necessary skills to move to your town and meet the demand (that'd be Quirky Idea #3). Essentially, you've got a city building game where the emphasis is on a network not of roads but of relationships. Keep an ever-growing population content and you'll progress through a series of five increasingly challenging scenarios.

Managing a large town can be quite daunting, particularly if you return to the game after a break and inevitably forget who knows who and who lives where. Easing matters is the ability to invite old friends to each new town you take over. Nonetheless it can become tedious having to keep in touch with hundreds of people; ignore them too long and they'll pack their bags and leave, thus denying you a potentially vital contact.



BOVINE STRATEGY Farms are essential, but mind the ozone!

*Metropolis Maker* is a deceptively simple game. Yet it succeeds because a feeling of power and control always seems just within reach, and that's makes for incredibly addictive experience.

/ DAVID WILDGOOSE

## VERDICT

PSW

### UPPERS

- Damn addictive
- Challenging and fun
- Flashes of humour
- Charming presentation

### DOWNERS

- Gets repetitive
- Needs intense concentration
- Visually primitive
- Odious soundtrack

GRAPHICS - Endearing in a 'Hmm, that's crap' kinda way. **6**

SOUND - Speech would have fleshed out the characters better. **4**

LIFESPAN - Five towns is a serious challenge. Replayable, too. **8**

### OVERALL SCORE

Although it lacks the personalised touches of *The Sims*, this is a worthy alternative for those who can't wait for the real thing.

**7**





**GNARLY** The pain was intense as he impaled himself in the board.



**INDOOR POOL** Artificial waves - it's just not the real thing, is it?

# KELLY SLATER'S PRO SURFER

PLANET X MEETS THE LONELY PLANET

TYPE	SPORTS
PLAYERS	1-2
OUT	NOW
DISTRIBUTOR	ACTIVISION
PRICE	\$99.95
DEVELOPER	TREYARCH
RATED	GS+

## ANOTHER TITLE FROM THE ACTIVISION

O2 line of extreme sports, *Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer* is not so extreme as much as alternative. It sets itself apart by creating

a different mood: dolphins, adventuring, the murmur of the sea at dawn. As opposed to dodging traffic, swearing taxi drivers and punk music. It inspires visions of tanned bodies, bluebottles and the northern beaches - the perfect antidote to anyone's winter blues.

Step aboard an ocean fairing boat of some sort, which a plethora of the world's big name surfers are using to tour the great breaks around the globe, including Tom Carroll, Tom Curren, Bruce Irons, Nathan Fletcher and Lisa Anderson. The travel doco style is matched by the extensive use of video footage to set the scene of each real world surf location. The intro to the wave pool training ground in Japan shows Kelly doing a furious backflip in inches deep water - compelling stuff. On this theme, Kelly's voiceovers create a personal connection with the world of surfing.

With this much depth in the setting, it's a pity that

play comes off as a little safe. The career mode offers short runs of a single level - or in this case, a wave. On this wave, surfers complete goals in the trad O2 style: high scores, knocking stuff over, particular moves, etc. There's an analogue timer that counts down in the top right of the screen. A familiar range of tricks - including aeriels, flips, floaters (read grinds) and face tricks (read manuals) - means the skate savvy are well prepared.

Unlike a skate park or cityscape that offer extreme players various lines to choose from, here there is just the wave - and it's the same wave for the entirety of each run. It doesn't swell and change, or bottom out - once the wave breaks, there she is. In true O2 style, you bail only when you lose balance or land a trick sideways. Ride along the top of the wave? As much as you like. Fall off the back of a wave? Not possible. As long as aeriels are landed roughly straight and surfing backwards is negotiated carefully, there's no reason why you can't stay up forever. Which is good because if you keep your super meter powered, you can link aeriels to face tricks for mucho high scores. Enjoyable and accessible in the beginning but ultimately less satisfying, the

game plays a hair too easy.

*Slater* captures a nice mood but the mechanics need a tinker. A little less security in balance and some more various and evolving breaks might lend more thrills to the experience. Extended play reveals the game to be repetitive. Nonetheless, *Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer* is solid marine fun for the occasional surfer in us all. You might want to wait for *Transworld Surf* and see how the two compare.

/ JOHN DEWHURST



**CO-OP MODE** Oh dear, this is all going to end in tears.



**SURF'S UP** He reaches out to touch the caption...

VERDICT		PSW
<b>UPPERS</b>	<b>DOWNERS</b>	
- Pacific atmosphere	- Repetitive	
- Super easy to control	- Standard O2 design	
- Cool video extras	- Monophonic waves	
- Lots of tricks	- Maybe too easy	
<b>GRAPHICS</b>	- Nice water effects	7
<b>SOUND</b>	- Lapping waves and troppo music	7
<b>LIFESPAN</b>	- Shortlived	6
<b>OVERALL SCORE</b>		<b>6</b>
Nails the style, needs a little more substance and variety. But a promising start for the franchise, nonetheless.		



## REVIEW

JIMMY NEUTRON, BOY GENIUS / LETHAL SKIES



JUMP LOOK GODDARD Jimmy's trusty dog, not the French auteur.



DON'T GET YOUR HAIR WET Otherwise the dog's stool look will go!



EXPLAINED "There's actually a real dog inside. Dead, of course."

# JIMMY NEUTRON, BOY GENIUS

HE'S GOT AN IQ OF MORE THAN 144, YET HE'S RUNNING AROUND IN A GAME LIKE THIS. SOMETHING DOESN'T ADD UP.

TYPE	ADVENTURE / PLATFORM
PLAYERS	1
OUT	NOW
DISTRIBUTOR	THQ
PRICE	\$99.95
DEVELOPER	KALISTO
RATED	G
SEE IT ON DVD	
/ It's for kids, y'know?	
/ Utilise Goddard the dog	
/ Colourful platform action	
/ Warm-up for the film	

**JIMMY NEUTRON IS, IT SEEMS, A** Nickelodeon property due to star in his own CGI film. Thus he needs a PS2 game to mop up a few more kiddie dollars after they've been sick in the popcorn bucket, wet the cinema seat, been rushed to casualty and had the ticket stub removed from behind their tonsils. And here it is.

Amazingly, *Jimmy Neutron, Boy Genius* isn't that terrible. It's been created by French developer Kalisto, also responsible for the particularly bloody and mangled *Nightmare Creatures 2* on PSone – so it's eminently qualified to deal with children, then. Fortunately it's resisted the temptation to give Jimmy an axe and a fizzy feeling in his mind, and everything's just as lovely and nice as mums and dads would expect. Aaahhh.

Jimmy does have Goddard, though, the robotic pet dog he built with his genius brain, and the canine contraption comes in useful in a variety of ways. Jimmy can use him as a pogo stick, for

instance, for reaching the higher-placed atoms – which take the place of coins in traditional platformers – which at least makes the tiresome process a little quicker. There's also a number of other gadgets such as helicopter things, Flycycle things and jetpack things, but Jimmy's movement is rather unexciting and these sections less than taxing. However, the many little sub-games lurking around the six reasonably sized levels provide a little relief. Some are childishly easy, but some, such as a side-scrolling space shooter, are more entertaining. It's still not going to entertain Dad once Sonny-boy's asleep, though.

The whole thing moves smoothly enough so as not to send Junior into a spittle-flicking epileptic fit, although the worlds are rather blocky and strangely flat despite their colour. Compared to the likes of *Jak & Daxter* it's deeply underwhelming, but for less discerning Neutron fan-maniacs it'll surely get the job done. Certainly you'd need to already be a fan just to cope with Jimmy's

upsetting hairdo – it's as if a sick dog has voided its bowels into a Mr Whippy machine, then used Jimmy as a cone. Not nice.

Poke around the menu screen and you can find some amusing 'secret files' – marked 'secret files' in big letters – containing two trailers and a selection of scenes from the movie. While entertaining, they only drive home the game's real purpose: to advertise the film. Beyond that it's just another lifeless, elderly-feeling platform-style concoction with a license tacked on – it's not so bad that children will hate you for buying it, true, but you really should encourage them to play the far superior *Jak & Daxter* instead. And if they're too young to get a grip on that, well, maybe you should send them outside to play in the fresh air.

/ STEVEN WILLIAMS



KNOB HEAD Nick admires Jimmy's phallic hair.



FAIR TO MIDDLING A five rated game. That's our neutron opinion.

## VERDICT

PSW

### UPPERS

- Lots of sub-games and gadgets
- Smooth and OK looking
- Better than *Monsters Inc*
- Does the job

### DOWNERS

- Sad sense of inevitability
- Lacking much challenge
- PSone-style graphics
- License first, game second

GRAPHICS - Smooth but overly simple, blocky graphics

5

SOUND - Present and adequate, but nothing special

5

LIFESPAN - More of a fad than a long term hobby

4

### OVERALL SCORE

The basic look and thrills movement probably won't bother its target audience, but the frequent loading and varying level of challenge might. For young fans of Jimmy only.

4





UNION CITY BLUE The world is half drowned. For our slower readers, that's the bottom half.



MADE IN AMERICA Gerry's new bonnet ornament was the talk of the town.



# LETHAL SKIES

CAN ANYONE TOPPLE ACE COMBAT AS PS2'S BEST BIT OF JET FIGHTERY?

## EVERYBODY HAS A SLIGHT

deficiency of some sort. It's knowing how to mask it that's the real secret in not letting it hold you back. Sarah

Michelle Gellar favours those stylishly angled side-on shots that avoid showing her wonky nose in all its lumpy splendour. Alfie Langer developed his "leg pull-over" tackling technique in order to compensate for being the smallest bloke on the field. And Jennifer Lopez has transformed her rather ample arse from a much mocked celebrity flaw into something men, fond of the more wholesome woman, would gladly give up their arms in exchange for a squeeze. The developer of *Lethal Skies* on the other hand, has just decided to flood the entire world to cover up the game's complete lack of speed.

Compared to the excellent *Ace Combat: Distant Thunder*, *Lethal Skies* chugs quite a bit. Throughout, it lacks any real sense of pace, which considering fighter pilots usually scream through the skies at the speed of sound, isn't too promising. However, realising this, the developer has conveniently covered the world in a blue blanket of water so that the ground detail your PS2 has to process is kept to a minimum. It's a wily trick but not an altogether effective one.

The sea looks very unconvincing and the skyscrapers jutting out of the drink resemble something from an early Amiga game. The

justification for all this wetness is a globally-warmed earth in the near future where, despite the fact that most of the population are sharing a locker with Davey Jones, people still can't stop shooting at each other. To summarise the political picture, this means that as a member of the World Alliance you've got to take out the rebels of the shady sounding World Order Reorganisation Front.

In gaming terms, it's pretty much *Ace Combat* only not as good. Actually that's a bit harsh... *Ace Combat* was so good that it's going to take a monumental effort to topple it – *Lethal Skies* isn't utterly terrible, but it loses out to its superior sibling in pretty much every department.

Where *Ace Combat* had a wonderfully stylish narrative that cleverly wove the missions into an encompassing tale, *Lethal Skies* just feels like a succession of increasingly more difficult missions. And the tasks themselves lack the imagination of *Ace Combat*, instead conforming to all of the jet fighter clichés. Dogfights, canyon runs, dogfights, sinking ships, dogfights, sinking more ships... you get the picture.

Being the most prominent feature, the (you guessed it) dogfights are also something of a disappointment. Manoeuvring your plane can feel a little sluggish and too much of your time is taken up fighting to stop your plane from stalling and dropping out of the sky. Unlike *Ace Combat*'s forgiving throttle control, every movement in this

game causes your plane to lose speed, but if you keep your finger on the gas you lose some of your close quarter manoeuvrability. It's an attempt at realism that we could really do without as it just feels like a bit of an irritation.

*Lethal Skies* never knows if it wants to be a serious flight sim or an arcade game. In the end it doesn't even manage to combine the best bits of both. As you've probably guessed already, *Lethal Skies* ends up as merely an inferior *Ace Combat* clone. It's fun if you can forgive the admittedly small irritations but overall it's merely average.

/ MIKEY FOLEY

## VERDICT

PSW

### UPPERS

- Nice cockpit view
- Imaginative adversaries
- Real world landmarks
- Mid-air refuelling

### DOWNERS

- Lethargic sense of speed
- Irritating pilot chatter
- Bland landscapes
- The guns are too effective

### GRAPHICS

Merely functional, we expect better from a PS2

5

### SOUND

• Corny wingman chatter

5

### LIFESPAN

Plenty of challenging missions

6

### OVERALL SCORE

*Lethal Skies* is unfortunate to come up against the superior quality of *Ace Combat* in the PS2 flying arena. It's fun but you'll never love it with any sort of intense passion.

5

TYPE	FLYING / SHOOTING
PLAYERS	1
OUT	NOW
DISTRIBUTOR	THQ
PRICE	\$99.95
DEVELOPER	SMIC ACE
RATED	M15+
SEE IT ON DVD	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>/ An unsafe world...</li> <li>/ Battle the World Order Reorganisation Front...</li> <li>/ Skies that are er... lethal!</li> </ul>	



## REVIEW

NINJA ASSAULT / LARGO WINCH



**MULTIPLAYER** Shoot ninjas. With a friend. Double your fun.

**THE NINJA SAS** You can't shoot their chutes before they land.

**MORNING BOSS** No strategy here, just point and shoot.

# NINJA ASSAULT

BILL AND TED TOLD US WOODEN COLTS WERE THE GO IN FEUDAL JAPAN

TYPE	SHOOTER
PLAYERS	1-2
OUT	NOW
DISTRIBUTOR	SONY
PRICE	\$99.95
DEVELOPER	NAMCO
RATED	M15+

**I'M NOT SURE WOODEN COLTS WERE** around back when Shoguns and Demon Lords were fighting for control of the world. In this light gun game from arcade stalwarts Namco, none of the bipedal enemies faced on-screen have handguns, they're all wielding bows or claws or ninja stars. So for no good reason other than light gun games are popular in arcades, *Ninja Assault* has the player brandishing a wooden handgun in ancient Japan. This translates to a feeling of Lameness. As artificial as any game is, there is just no logic to fighting off ninjas in Ancient Japan with a wooden handgun...

This wouldn't make a lick of difference if *Ninja Assault* proved a blast to play. Which it isn't. It is wave after wave of ninja opponents running at the screen while you frantically try to shoot them all. Each enemy has a life bar. Your average grunt takes a couple shots, while lead-lined demon spirits take about eight. This isn't at the



**LIGHTNING QUICK** Reflexes, that is. And the time it takes to finish.

end of a level either, this is in normal play.

A game like *Time Crisis* boasts thin-skinned enemies and as such when they all pop out you can develop a rhythm in play that is exciting and necessary for success. If you look for ways around the enemies with your shots, you are successful; the design makes sense. When in *Ninja Assault*, a half-dozen brick walls bust out and run at the screen, there's no logic to who you'd strike first or why you'd do that. There's just the Ninjas. And the Gun.

Past examples of hot shooting games nail the basics (accuracy, stopping power, speed and rhythm) with some flair and personality. In *Time Crisis*, you face the clock and can duck; *Point Blank* had kookiness and puzzle elements. These games are exciting and different. *Ninja Assault* has the basic ingredients but nothing new to offer.

The ninjas bob and weave, or fly through the air or shoot arrows from the far distance. The camera wheels around and moves about the place creating the impression of motion. The camera is on rails and as such there is the frequent thrill of someone jumping out from behind you. We've seen it before.

The execution of *Ninja Assault* is lukewarm. Although the parts might be there, the sum total is as bland as possible. Bonus games (including the Flurry-of-Ninja-Stars-Flying-From-the-Trees and Shoot-the-Ninja-but-not-the-Girl themes) are quite cool, but they're hardly enough to inject the variety the game so desperately needs. Bankrupt of ideas, it is one long trigger pull to

the end. After the thirtieth wave of acrobatic claw men and super-deformed teddy bears, the banality of *Ninja Assault* dawns anew - this is just Ninjas and Guns.

/JOHN DEWHURST



**THAT'S NO NINJA** Correct. It's a samurai. Shoot him, too.

VERDICT		PSW
<b>UPPERS</b>	<b>DOWNERS</b>	
• Passable shooting	• Just Ninjas and Guns	
• Good bonus games	• Highly repetitive	
• Hordes of enemies	• Little logic	
• It's got two players	• Visually unimpressive	
<b>GRAPHICS</b>	• Crisp and fast, but basic environments	5
<b>SOUND</b>	• Cool Japanese drums and gongs	7
<b>LIFESPAN</b>	• Still-born	3
<b>OVERALL SCORE</b>		4
About as mediocre as a light gun game gets. Which is pretty mediocre. Not the game you bought a PS2 for.		





WET PATCH Largo manfully tries to shrug off the embarrassment.



BY CANDLELIGHT Now, those Templars must be here somewhere.

# LARGO WINCH: EMPIRE UNDER THREAT

MR BOND, PLEASE TAKE THAT SILVER SPOON OUT OF YOUR MOUTH. OH AND STOP SPEAKING FRENCH.

TYPE	ADVENTURE
PLAYERS	1
OUT	NOW
DISTRIBUTOR	UBI SOFT
PRICE	\$99.95
DEVELOPER	UBI SOFT
RATED	M 15+

I'D LOVE TO BE ABLE TO TELL YOU that *Largo Winch* is one of those rare adaptations that take the elements that made the original property so popular and inject them into a brilliant game. I'd love to but I can't for two key reasons. One is that the original property is only on French TV so who knows what made it so popular? I should mention that when I checked the website the presence of David Carradine's face gave me a bad feeling (if it's not Kung Fu, he shouldn't be on TV). Secondly, there's the tepid game design.

Largo Winch is the main character of the TV show, comics and our game. He's a billionaire playboy adventurer... think James Bond in the lead role of a Richie Rich episode. This episode (I mean, the game) begins with a double murder and the discovery of secret (and very illegal) research at one of Largo's companies in Mexico. The jet-setting story would be the best part of the game, taking Largo around the world, seeing him visiting seedy Russian Bars,

breaking and entering, computer hacking bad-guys' PCs, bedding beautiful babes and getting into a *Reservoir Dogs* three-gun stand-off.

All this prime-time action comes wrapped in simple adventure gameplay. Largo picks up clues, wanders back and forth between rooms talking to people, solves clue-based puzzles and tackles mini-games. All in all it's remarkably straight-up. Any interactive elements on the screen are clues (or as exciting as "some magazines"), combat is a simple mini-game, sub-plots there ain't and it's all deadly serious.

Also, it's a straight path from beginning to end; I would have said it was a straight "ride" but that implies more speed than *Largo Winch* generates. There are no mission critical plot branches and if you make a bad choice in dialogue with characters, you can just go back and try again. If you miss clues that you need, you get a message saying "you can do better" when you try to leave the screen.

The puzzles are mainly pretty easy or can be defeated with simple trial and error. Sometimes, the only way to find a clue is to wander around until your action icon turns to "grab". Also your inventory is cleared at the end of each level, keeping the clue

combinations down. Even novice players are kept well on track without having to worry about red herrings or missing that clue on the first screen.

On the other hand, even novice players will notice there's something missing. Let me see: graphics a bit dated but animation good, sound okay, mini-games add some variety, plot interesting, huge cast of characters - what could it be? I've got a game, I've got a franchise. Wait a second - no inspiration. Ahh...

/TIMOTHY C. BEST



WIFEBEATER As far as Beckhams go, that's about the worst.



SEPULCHRAL Ah, it's the old spooky medieval church bit.



SWINGIN' PAD Perfect for Largo to seduce the ladies.

VERDICT		PSW
UPPERS	DOWNERS	
• Deep backstory	• Very linear	
• Babes	• Slow moving	
• Many mini-games	• Lots of back and forth	
• Globe-trotting	• Franchise lost on us	
GRAPHICS	• Not brilliant, but nice feel	6
SOUND	• Voice acting, music – it's okay	5
LIFESPAN	• Puzzling	6
OVERALL SCORE		6
Old school adventure game, full of clues, puzzles and combining clues to solve puzzles. Its slow pace and linear path might put off some.		



# MINI TIPS



BIG HEAD MODE, SMALL HEAD MODE, 'MOVE THE SKULL DURING LOADING' FEATURE... LIFE DOESN'T GET BETTER THAN THIS.

## END GAME

### ALL MIGHTY JOE JUPITER

From the main menu screen, enter the code MIGHTIER by pulling the trigger to correspond with the order of each letter in the alphabet (13, 9, 7, 8, 20, 9, 5, 18). After each entry, press duck to input the next letter.

### ARCADE MODE

Follow the same procedure as above, but this time enter the code BLAM (2, 12, 1,

13). Remember to press duck after each entry to move onto the next letter.

### COUNTRY CHALLENGES

Enter the code ABROAD (1, 2, 18, 15, 1, 4) at the main menu screen in the same way as above.

### MAST CODE

Enter the code MEBIGCHEAT (13, 5, 2, 9, 7, 3, 8, 5, 20).



## MIKE TYSON HEAVYWEIGHT BOXING

### UNLOCK ALL BOXERS, ARENAS AND GAME MODES

Enter [D], [C], [L], [R] at the main title screen.

### EXTRA CUSTOM BOXER FEATURES

Enter [LT], [RT], [X], [X], [A], [X] at the main title screen.

### BIG HEAD MODE

Enter [D], [C], [A], [D] at the title screen.

### SMALL HEAD MODE

Simply enter [D], [C], [D], [A] at the main title screen.

### FLAT MODE

Simply enter [D], [A], [C], [D] at the main title screen.

### MUTANT MODE

Simply enter [D], [A], [D], [A] at the main title screen.



## AGGRESSIVE INLINE

### MASTER CODE

Enter P, L, Z, D, O, M, E at the cheat screen.

### LEVEL SELECT / ALL PARK EDITOR

#### OBJECTS / FULL STATS

Enter [A], [A], [D], [D], [D], [D], [D], B, A, B, A.

### ALL BONUS CHARACTERS

Simply enter [D], [D], [D], [D], [D], [D], [D], [D], [D].

### ALL KEYS

Enter S, K, E, L, E, T, O, N.

### INVINCIBILITY

Enter K, H, U, F, U.

### LOW GRAVITY WALLRIDE

Enter [A], [D], [A], [D], [D], [D], [D], A, B, A, B, S.

### SUPER SPIN

Enter [D], [D], [D], [D], [D], [D], [D], [D], [D], [D].

### PERFECT MANUALS

Enter O, U, E, Z, D, O, N, T, S, L, E, E, P.

### PERFECT HANDPLANTS

Enter J, U, S, T, I, N, [Space], B, A, I, L, E, Y.

### PERFECT GRINDS

Enter B, I, G, U, P, Y, A, S, E, L, F.

### JUICE REGENERATION

Enter [D], [D], [D], [D], [D], [D], [D], [D], [D], A, I.

### FULL JUICE BAR

Enter B, A, K, A, B, A, K, A. Your juice bar will remain full, even when you crash [as you inevitably will].



## SCOOBY-DOO

### HOLIDAY BONUSES

Change the PlayStation2 system date to the following entries for some special seasonal decoration.

#### DATE

JULY 4  
OCTOBER 31  
DECEMBER 25  
JANUARY 1

#### WHAT YOU GET

Assorted fireworks  
Giant bats  
Snow  
More fireworks



## BARBARIAN

### NOT QUITE A GLADIATOR YET?

#### ALTERNATE COSTUME

Highlight a character and then press [RT] at the selection screen.

#### MOVE THE SKULL

Use the left analogue stick during loading to control the skull.





## STUNTMAN

### MASTER CODE

Enter **MUssOn** as a case-sensitive driver's name at the New Game menu.

### ALL DRIVING GAMES, CARS AND TOYS

Enter **BindI** as a case-sensitive driver's name at the New Game menu. Note: The last character is an upper-case "i".

### ALL TOYS

Enter **MeFF** as a case-sensitive driver's name at the New Game menu.

### ALL TRAILERS

Enter **fella** as a case-sensitive driver's name at the New Game menu to unlock all

trailers at the Filmography menu. Note: Characters three and four are both a lower case "l".

### ALL CARS

Enter **spiDER** or **ChUmP** as a case-sensitive driver's name at the New Game menu.

### NITRO AT ANY TIME

Enter **NiTrouS** as a case-sensitive driver's name at the New Game menu to have an unlimited supply of nitro.

### QUICK START

Hold **RS** during the pre-race countdown.



## PLATINUM TIPS

### SMUGGLERS RUN

#### INVISIBILITY

Pause the game and press the following:  
**R1, L1, L1, R2, L1, L1, L2**

#### LIGHTER CARS

Pause the game and press the following:  
**L1, R1, L1, L2, R2, R2**

#### ZERO GRAVITY

Pause the game and press the following:  
**R1, R2, R1, R2, L1, L1**

#### SPEED DECREASE

Pause the game and press the following:  
**R2, L2, L1, R1, L1, L1**

#### SPEED UP

Pause the game and press the following:

**R1, L1, L2, R2, L1, L1**

#### CARS FLOAT WHEN HIT

Pause the game and press the following:  
**R1, R2, R1, R2, L1 (3)**

#### WIZARD OF OZ MODE

Pause the game and press:  
**R1, R2, R1, R2, L1, L1**



### TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3

#### COMPLETE IT BEFORE PART FOUR ARRIVES.

"Cheats". Enter **Yohomies** (case sensitive) to unlock all characters.

#### CHEAT MENU

Enter the options menu, then select "Cheats". Enter **backdoor** (case sensitive) to unlock the cheat menu at the pause screen. The sound of money being collected will confirm correct code entry. Press **PS** to pause the game in Career or Free Skate mode to access the cheat menu. Press **X** to toggle the options. Note: This does not unlock the hidden characters and bonus levels.

#### LEVEL SELECT

Enter the options menu, then select "Cheats". Enter **RoadTrip** (case sensitive) to unlock all levels.

#### FULL STATS

Enter the options menu, then select "Cheats". Enter **PUMPMEUP** for maximum stat points.

#### ALL DECKS FOR CURRENT SKATER

Enter the options menu, then select "Cheats". Enter **givemesomewood** (case sensitive) to unlock all the decks.

#### ALL FMV SEQUENCES

Enter the options menu, then select "Cheats". Enter **Peepshow** (case sensitive) to unlock all FMV sequences.

#### ALL CREATED SKATERS

Enter the options menu, then select "Cheats". Enter **WeEatDirt** (case sensitive) to unlock all created skaters.

#### MASTER CODE

Enter the options menu, then select "Cheats". Enter **MAGICMISSILE** as a code to unlock all mode options, such as "Snowboard", "Giant", and "First Person". This also unlocks the "Super Stats", "Always Perfect", "Perfect Manuals" and "Perfect Rails" cheats. The sound of money being collected will confirm the correct code entry.

#### ALL CHARACTERS

Enter the options menu, then select

## MEDAL OF HONOR FRONTLINE

### INVINCIBILITY

Pause the game and press **R1, L1, L1, R2, L1, L1**.

### UNLIMITED AMMO

Pause the game and press **R1, L1, L1, R2, L1, L1**. Note: This also effects enemies.

### MASTER CODE

Enter **DAWOIKS** at the Enigma Machine. Green lights will confirm correct code entry. Select the Bonus option underneath the Enigma Machine to enable/disable any desired cheat.

### PHOTON TORPEDOES

Enter **TPDOMOHTON** at the Enigma Machine and follow the same procedure as above.

### HEAD GEAR

Enter **HABRDASHR** at the Enigma Machine.

### MAKING OF 'D-DAY' MOVIE

Enter **BACKSTAGED** at the Enigma Machine.

### MAKING OF 'NEEDLE IN A HAYSTACK' MOVIE

Enter **BACKSTAGER** at the Enigma Machine.

### MAKING OF 'SEVERAL BRIDGES

### TOO FAR' MOVIE

Enter **BACKSTAGEF** at the Enigma Machine to access the movie.

### MAKING OF 'HORTEN'S NEST' MOVIE

Enter **BACKSTAGES** at the Enigma Machine.

### MAKING OF 'STORM IN THE PORT' MOVIE

Enter **BACKSTAGET** at the Enigma Machine.

### MAKING OF 'ROLLING THUNDER' MOVIE

Enter **BACKSTAGEI** at the Enigma Machine.

### SECRET MEDAL

Successfully complete the game with a Gold Star in every mission to receive the EA LA Medal of Valor.





## [ 2002 ]



■ **Starring:** Josh Hartnett

■ **Director:** Ridley Scott

■ **Rated:** MA15+

■ Genre: Action

■ **Distributor:** Columbia Tri-Star



**RIDLEY SCOTT**

decided to follow up cannibalism (*Hannibal*) and wronged Romans (*Gladiator*) with this.

a used-to-be-true-before-we-got-our-hands-on-it story of military fubars in Somalia. And we would say it should be called *Black Hawks Down*, but that would be petty. It's a real boy's own action tale (we

don't know any girls who found this interesting), essentially one enormously long fight scene prefaced by 20 minutes of rather predictable set up. The characters are stereotypical war movie types, sadly – the nice, doomed one with the wife, the gung-ho psycho, the gobby chancer hiding his fear with bluff nonsense, the resentful long-termers. And so on. Josh Hartnett is also rather bland for a leading man for our money, although his performance is solid enough.

The same can't be said for the film as a whole, however, as it occasionally seems to recoil from the otherwise incessant fighting

and go searching for something to lighten the mood. What it finds is some unlikely and disjointed comedy(-ish) relief moments featuring a deaf gunner and a few lost men.

But even zooming in on these helpless soldiers can't make up for the lack of real development elsewhere in the film, especially as the downing of the second helicopter – while it's as impressive a sight as the first crash – is simply too familiar to make any real difference. One chopper, two choppers... unless you're in one of them, who cares how many go down when their situation doesn't

bring anything new?

It's a reasonable watch, however, and the pseudo documentary style lends a weight to the attacks that's occasionally frightening. The action's good, if repetitive in the end, but no amount of military un-intelligence scenes can make it the indictment it wants to be.



**EXTRAS** Commentaries from director, producer, author and screenwriter, veteran interviews, five featurettes, deleted scenes, effects tests, trailers and more.



COUNTER CLOCK



01:47:23 That's gotta hurt

Surely one of the most upclose grotesque moments in a pretty packed film, the idea of somebody shoving their whole arm inside your leg is quite repellent. Shot by unsteady flashlight in a scrupulously unclean environment, it's even more upsetting. Shame it's all for such a clichéd scene: 'I'm... cold!' Hmmm.

EXTRAS, EXTRAS!



## DIRECTOR'S COMMENTARY

This bearded man is Ridley Scott, and he's your guide to why everybody's wearing green and shooting at civilians from 'copters that don't work. It's very interesting, you know.



## BEHIND THE SCENES

Watch the cast and crew talk about what it's like to be in the cast and crew, and how super Ridley Scott is! It's not real, you know, it's all faked! You won't believe your eyes! You won't.



## DELETED SCENES

All the bits that were simply too rubbish or pointless to make it to the cinema huddled in a special section which, bizarrely, we now find more interesting than the film they were quite rightly left out of.



# THE SIMPSONS: SEASON 2 (1990-1991)



- Starring: Dan Castellaneta
- Creator: Matt Groening
- Certificate: PG
- Genre: Comedy
- Distributor: 20th Century Fox



**SEASON 2 BROUGHT** about the beginning of Simpsons mania throughout the world. I don't know a twenty-something that isn't a fan of *The Simpsons*. Perhaps we could all relate to our own dysfunctional families. I did. This was the time period when every relative was ensured a spot in the 'best ever' category by buying you a Bart shirt. It was also when the series began to come into its own.

Design solidified and laughter became more frequent. Animation grew beyond the confinements of kid's entertainment into the forum satire and wit. Irreverence was equally shared out between politics, religion and the media. *The Simpsons* did more than make us laugh, it opened up the possibility for other animated series such as *Futurama*, *South Park*, *Daria* and *Invader Zim*. The Simpsons journey to DVD has been a long time coming but worth the wait.

**EXTRAS** The audio commentary is a pleasant surprise Matt Groening, provides us with a deeper look into a series we thought we knew pretty well.

# THE THING (1982)



- Starring: Kurt Russell
- Director: John Carpenter
- Rated: MA15+
- Genre: Thriller
- Distributor: Universal



**ALTHOUGH IT FAILED** to set the box office alight upon its original cinematic release, John Carpenter's *The Thing* has subsequently become a cult favourite of almost legendary proportions. Whether it's the gruesome, ahead-of-their-time special effects used to depict the virtually un-depictable Thing itself or the sublime concept of an alien able to devour any being then

reproduce them almost exactly that is responsible for its continued we're not sure. Chances are it's both. Even 20 years later, *The Thing* manages to chill viewers to the bone with its deep-set paranoia and remarkable FX wizardry (despite the resolutely old-school technology used). Still superb, and now accompanied by a host of fascinating features.

**EXTRAS** Commentary from Carpenter and Russell, 80-minute Making Of doco, out-takes, trailer, production archives, location design, storyboards, concept art.

# COLLATERAL DAMAGE (2002)



- Starring: Arnold Schwarzenegger
- Director: Andrew Davis
- Certificate: 15
- Type: Action
- Distributor: Warner Bros



**SCHWARZENEGGER** plays an ordinary Joe called — no, not Ordinary Joe, amazingly — Gordon Brewer. His enemies include a man known as 'The Wolf'. There are guns, there is vengeance, there are bangs. It's Ah-nold, so he wins in the end, but Ah-nold's a bit too creaky now, so it's not as much fun to watch him kill stuff. Do you need to know any more? OK, this is the one delayed after September

11, as Brewer is a fireman who loses his wife and daughter in a terrorist attack (in Hollywood that's carte blanche to kill). Annoyed that the officaldom is toothless, he heads off to Columbia to shoot them himself. Curiously, it was never delayed because it was totally bad. Muscle movies are old; Arnie's old; poor plots, lame SFX and bad dialogue should be too, but on this evidence they're going strong.

**EXTRAS** Commentaries from director and Schwarzenegger, 'A Hero in a New Era' documentary, deleted scenes.

## DVD INSIDER

### INSTANT LIKE HOLLYWOOD FLAVOURED POT NOODLE



**/ WAVE OF MUTILATION** Images are surfacing of the intriguing *Ghost Ship*, a supernatural horror starring Gabriel Byrne (*End of Days*) and Julianna Margulies (*Nurse Hathaway* in *ER*). The pair are salvaging a ship, missing since 1953, drifting in the Bering Sea. But strange things happen, and they end up trapped on the ship with something evil... *Ghost Ship*'s due in cinemas in October, and on DVD shortly after.



**/ LUKE AT THAT** Yet more detailed, er... details on the *Attack of the Clones* DVD release due in October. What can you expect from this two-disc effort? Well, this: commentaries by Lucas, Rick McCallum, Ben Burtt (sound designer) Rob Coleman (ILM animation director), Pablo Helman, John Knoll and Ben Snow (FX supervisors), *From Puppets to Pixels: Digital Characters in Episode II* doc including the work on Yoda, *Films Are Not Released: They Escape* doc about sound, *State of the Art: The Previsualization of Episode II* with storyboards and animatics, *R2-D2: Beneath The Dome* spoof trailer, eight deleted scenes, a 12 part net documentary, exclusive John Williams *Across the Stars* music video with footage from scoring sessions, posters, adverts, four trailers, 12 TV spots, production photo gallery, a montage of ILM's 2000 FX shots and some exclusive DVD-ROM content. Sounds good...





## MAKING YOUR HEAD A BIT FULLER WITH GOOD STUFF



/ LYCRA COSTUME DRAMA

*Batman Vs Superman* represents a new stage in the superhero revival, with Wolfgang Peterson [*The Perfect Storm, Das Boot*] set to direct. Kevin Walker [*Se7en*] is in charge of the script, concerning the philosophical falling out of the two former allies; Superman's a Very Nice Man, after all, while Batman is bitter and vengeful. No stars are yet cast, but Matt Damon is expected to be in the running as Peterson desires depth and intelligence over dumb muscle. Shooting should begin in spring year for an early 2004 release.



## / CARTOON CAPE-ERS 2

Despite the above film, solo projects for both cops are still going ahead. The infuriatingly named McG (*Charlie's Angels*) is to craft a new Superman tale, while Darren Aronofsky & Frank Stack of Darren Aronofsky & Frank Stack fame are to spew out *Batman: Year One*, in which he sits around cursing himself for being just too late to get Christ to sign a copy of the bible for him.



## / THE THING 2?

That's the word on the streets, anyway. In the wake of a revival of interest in John Carpenter's horror-thriller-sci-fi classic, *The Thing* [see p89], thanks to the imminent release of Vivendi's excellent videogame [see our review on p66], rumours abound that Universal has been putting the feelers out about a possible sequel. Given that the game follows on from the original film's story, we think that'd be as good a place as any to start. John Carpenter is potentially interested, but allegedly wants too much money.

**MONSTERS INC. (2002)**



■ **Starring:** John Goodman

■ **Director:** Peter Dinkler *et al.*

■ **Rated:** 

■ Genre: Comédie

■ Distributor: Buena Vista



## THE MOST BIZARRE

argument we've heard for why this succeeds is that 'it shows children how an industry works'.

Thankfully, Disney/Pixar avoided missing the point completely and produced a genuinely charming movie. John Goodman is his usual brilliant self as the voice of Sulley, the top child-scaring monster in a factory that farms energy from children's screams, while Billu

Crystal provides great support as the voice of Mike. The story set-up is of such self-evident simplicity it's genius, and the film's consistently engaging no matter how old you are. The chief problem is which version to buy: the two-disc Collector's Edition with added extras, or the Family Edition on a single disc for a few dollars less? For the money, we definitely recommend the latter.

**EXTRAS** Out-takes, deleted scenes, two new short films, *Finding Nemo* preview, introduction to Mike and Sulley.

DUDE! THE ROCK! SWEET!

THE ARCHETYPAL STONER MEETS AN ARCHEOLOGICAL NIGHTMARE IN A JUNGLE SEARCH FOR LOST GOLD. OK THEN... IT COULD BE REALLY FUNNY, EVEN IF IT'S NOT ACTUALLY MEANT TO BE.

**FAMOUS EYEBROW-WINCHING PANTO WRESTLER THE ROCK IS TO STAR AS** a bounty hunter in the upcoming action movie *Hellorado*, alongside no lesser talent than Christopher Walken. Mr Rock's character hunts down his target – played by Seann William Scott of *Dude, Where's My Car?*, *American Pie* and *Final Destination* fame – in the Amazonian jungle, only to team up with him in search of a lost mine supposedly stuffed with incredible treasure. Sort of *Dude, Where's Mine Car?* then.

The brilliantly menacing Walken (*Pulp Fiction*, *True Romance* and a hundred great performances in a hundred dreadful films) plays Bloomcocks, the oddly named bad guy of the piece, while the female lead (who creates mucho friction between the unlikely buddies of Scott and The Rock's characters) has yet to be cast. Let's face it, this all sounds just stupid enough to be good. And it's great to see William Scott, perhaps spurred on by his weird spelling of Seann, continuing to star in films with fabulous names – *Dude* sequel *Seriously Dude*, *Where's My Car?* and *Bulletproof Monk* must be among the best ever. Production on *Hellorado* began in late September.



**THE ROCK** Doing that thing with his face as a comedy-esque mercenary.



**SCOTT** Doing that thing with the stupidity while The Rock chases him round trees.

## SHALLOW HAL [2001]



■ Starring: Jack Black

■ **Director:** The Farrelly Brothers

**Rated:** MA 15+

■ Genre: *Comedy*

■ **Distributor:** 20th Century Fox



## A DOPED-UP DAD

provides the words of wisdom, "Never settle for average", to his son moments before he passes away.

These parting words shape the nine-year-old Hal Larsen into a superficial existence of chasing skirt with the added words 'hot, young tail is what it's all about'. Hal's average looks propel him into life as a pathetic drooling fool. That is, until an encounter with the All-American self-

help guru Tony Robbins, who guides Hal to seek the "inner beauty" in others. Enter Gwyneth Paltrow with an added 300 pounds.

Directed by the Farrelly Brothers (*Dumb & Dumber*, *There's Something About Mary*), the deeply hidden message about perceptions of beauty provided through the media only appears as the characters drive off into the sunset. Not as funny as the Farrelly's previous movies, *Shallow Hal* gets lost amid the scantily clad Gwyneth and Jason Alexander's annoying role as Hal's Best friend, Mauricio.

## EXTRAS



# SILICON CELLULOID

## 2V8 SUPERCARS RACE DRIVER What if it was a film?



**THE GAME:** Rookie race driver Ryan McKane appears in an intermittent sequence of cut-scenes in an admirable attempt to provide an emotional context for much seat-of-the-pants racing action. From then on it's bash and barge tarmac duels all the way, pausing only to nip into the garage for a tune up or on a plane to globetrot around numerous championship series. It climaxes with Ryan sweeping to victory in the world championship and unlocking the Elite series and the chance to race against "Cannonball" Jack Johnson.

**THE FILM:** Rookie race driver Ryan McKane witnesses the "accidental" death of his race driving father, thus spurring him to follow in Dad's tyre tracks and chase world championship glory under a tin-top. Intense brotherly rivalry, a bunch of increasingly obnoxious opponents and a caricatured arch-nemesis who may or may not have been instrumental in his old man's death come together to ensure actually winning races is the least of Ryan's problems. It climaxes with Ryan overtaking the arch-nemesis on the last

corner of the last lap of the final race of the season to take the chequered flag and the title. He hugs his love interest on the podium and the credits roll.

**STARRING:** Vin Diesel has the pedigree (*The Fast and the Furious*) and the suitable surname, but the V8 Supercars setting means we'd like to see Heath Ledger on pole position.

**DIRECTED BY:** Renny Harlin is an obvious choice after his fantastic work on *Sly's Driven*, but if he's sadly unavailable then perhaps our

own David Caesar (*Idiot Box*, *Dirty Deeds*) could inject some much-needed self-deprecating Aussie humour into the whole affair.

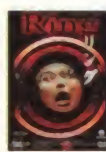
### WILL IT WORK?

The game's plot is wafer-thin, so much depends on how the script is fleshed out by whichever unlucky sod gets the thankless job. Which makes the likelihood of success quite difficult to predict. However, we will say that the actual race sequences had better be bloody good or else there'll be big, perhaps insurmountable, problems.

## RING. (1998)



- Starring: Matsushita Nanako
- Director: Hideo Nakata
- Rated: MA15+
- Genre: Horror
- Distributor: AV Channel



AAAAHHH, THOSE wacky Japanese are at it again! Japan's unique cultural perspective

produces equally unique art in film form as much as in videogames. *Ring*, based around a hugely successful horror novel, received a great deal of notoriety in Japan, leading to various sequels, spin-offs and remakes in the mere handful of years

since release. Its successful is due to its very simple storyline. After viewing an obscure videotape you have only one week to live. *Ring* provides an experience not dissimilar to the *Blair Witch Project* with visual and narrative elements of Tecmo's *Project Zero* (see p60). *Ring* may lack the Hollywood polish we expect from the post-modern teen-horror flick, but



where they've become predictable, *Ring*'s grit is unsettling.

While currently being remade by Director Gore Verbinski (*The Mexican* and *Mousehunt*), with Naomi Watts and Chris Cooper in the lead roles, we urge you to see the original first.

■■■■■■■■■■ 8

### EXTRAS

■■■■■■■■■■ 4

## PANIC ROOM (2002)



- Starring: Jodie Foster
- Director: David Fincher
- Rated: MA15+
- Genre: Thriller
- Distributor: Columbia TriStar



PANIC ROOM, WITH its implausible situation and string of plot inconsistencies, manipulates the

screen to actually work! Excuse the disbelief, but my preconceived notion that I would be watching the walls of 2x2m cell for two hours moved me to tears. Not that I didn't trust Jodie Foster's return to the screen after two years and two baby boys, nor that director David

Fincher, of *Fight Club* and *SE7EN* fame, wouldn't produce another intense feature, it was more the feeling of claustrophobia that had me concerned. Cinematography is what ultimately saves the viewer from the possibility of boredom; Fincher's love of the camera extending into every unreachable nook and cranny provides the beauty of this film. The camera travels through the walls and



ceilings of the four-storey New York brownstone, displaying intricate levels of detail, with the muted blues and grays of late night adding to the terror. This is not an edge-of-your-seat thriller, but as a throwback to a classic style of suspense it does provide a jump or two. Assisted by confined spaces and gruesome violence *Panic Room* is to be watched in the dark preferably during a storm.

■■■■■■■■■■ 8

**EXTRAS** Practically devoid of extras, buy the DVD for the film. Otherwise the picture disc, movie trailer and talent profiles, with little depth, are the 'big' selling points.

■■■■■■■■■■ 1



# SOUND STATION



## FINAL FANTASY VII

■ Label: DigiCube

■ Composer: Nobuo Uematsu

■ CDs: 4

■ Verdict:



4.5

Although it is nowhere near as revolutionary as the zealots would have you believe, the *Final Fantasy VII* OST is undoubtedly a work of brilliance. The

sample quality is a little questionable at times and is often not much better than what you'd expect to find on a SNES, but that doesn't stop Uematsu's stylish and exceedingly noir composition from shining through on at least seventy of the album's eighty-five tracks. One Winged Angel, in particular, stands out as one of the best pieces of game music ever and is worth the cost of the album by itself. Buy this soundtrack. Buy it now.



## FINAL FANTASY VIII

■ Label: Tokyo Pop

■ Composer: Nobuo Uematsu

■ CDs: 4

■ Verdict:



5/5

Regardless of your opinion of the game and its unanimously maligned draw system, this OST marks a high water point for Uematsu's composition that is yet to be

matched by anything he's done since. From the haunting choral chants of *Liberi Fatali* on the first CD to the ominous orchestral organs of *The Castle on the Last*, the score is incessantly intense and only breaks from the drama to deliver one of those delightfully Japanese 'happy-tracks' series aficionados have come to love. *Final Fantasy VIII* is the best OST in the series and comes with our highest possible recommendation. Top stuff, indeed.

# SOLID SNAKE'S BOOKMARKS

Favourite websites of your favourite PS2 characters



### The Snake Hole: A Metal Gear Solid

[angelfire.com/games4/mgs\\_tea/index.html](http://angelfire.com/games4/mgs_tea/index.html)



This kid has far too much time on his hands. The Snake Hole, named after yours truly, has all the reconnaissance data you'd ever need on me and everything I've ever been involved in. I don't know where this kid got his information and I don't care – if he's pulling anything shifty, I'll find out about it and have an M9 dart in the back of his skull before you can say 'tranquillised internet geek to go'.

### Stealth Tools

[www.bynoon.com/stealth.html](http://www.bynoon.com/stealth.html)

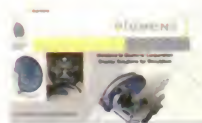


The pansies that run this mag inform me that I can't tell you kids where to buy good weapons, but to hell with that. The

range of tools available on this site is excellent and, provided you've got backing from one organisation or another, very affordable. Mini crossbows and blowdart guns are a bit below what I'm used to using in the field, but for they'd be perfect for amateurs like you. Just don't come crying to me when you shoot your damn eyes out.

### Elumens Coporation

[www.virtual-reality.com/](http://www.virtual-reality.com/)



These guys do 'display solutions for simulation', which is basically a wussy way to say 'VR training'. According to their marketing guff, their products can do everything from training soldiers and doctors to preparing your average production line slob for a life of drudgery and boredom. As you probably know, I happen to think VR's a crock – especially after that incident with Raiden. But hey, if you're too weak to make it in the field, then this is the place for you.

### Mullets Galore

[www.mulletsgalore.com](http://www.mulletsgalore.com)



I personally don't give a good god damn about my hair, but apparently it's a bit of a sticking point with some of you people. So, just in case I'm not around to give you your weekly mullet fix, here's a site with all the mullets you'll ever need. They're even categorised for your viewing 'pleasure'.





# INCOMING!

GAMES CURRENTLY WINGING THEIR WAY TO PS2

TITLE	PUBLISHER	TYPE
<b>OCTOBER</b>		
Colin McRae Rally 3	Infogrames	Racing
Crash Bandicoot 5 Platinum	Vivendi	Platformer
Donald Duck: Who Is PK?	Ubisoft	Platformer
FIFA 2003	Electronic Arts	Sports
Grand Theft Auto: Vice City	Take2	Action Adventure
Jak & Daxter Platinum	Sony	Platformer
Jimmy Neutron, Boy Genius	THQ	Adventure
Max Payne Platinum	Take2	Shooter
Metropolis Mania	Ubisoft	Strategy
Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit 2	Electronic Arts	Racing
Ninja Assault	Sony	Shooter
Onimusha 2	THQ	Action Adventure
Rally Fuzion: Race of Champions	Activision	Racing
Sega Soccer Slam	Infogrames	Sports
State of Emergency Platinum	Take2	Action
Summoner 2	THQ	RPG
Son of All Fears	Ubisoft	Shooter
Taz Wanted	Infogrames	Platformer
Terminator	Infogrames	Shooter
The Thing	Vivendi	Action Adventure
Wizardry	Ubisoft	RPG
<b>NOVEMBER</b>		
007: Nightfire	Electronic Arts	Shooter
Black & Bruised	Vivendi	Fighting
Conflict Desert Storm	Infogrames	Action Strategy
Dark Angel	Vivendi	Action
Delta Force: Land Warrior	Electronic Arts	Shooter
Dragonball Z	Infogrames	Fighting
Dynasty Warriors Tactics	THQ	Strategy
ET: Return to the Green Planet	Ubisoft	Adventure
Ghost Recon	Ubisoft	Action Strategy
Gungrave	Activision	Shooter
Halloween	Take2	Adventure
Harry Potter: Chamber of Secrets	Electronic Arts	Adventure
Hot Wheels Velocity X	THQ	Racing
Inquisition	Take2	Adventure
Kingdom Hearts	Sony	RPG
LOTR: Fellowship of the Ring	Vivendi	RPG
Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers	Electronic Arts	Action
Marvel vs Capcom 2	THQ	Fighting
Minority Report	Activision	Action
Monster Jam	Ubisoft	Action
NBA Live 2003	Electronic Arts	Sports
Ratchet & Clank	Sony	Platformer
Red Faction 2	THQ	Shooter
Robocop	Interplay	Shooter
Run Like Hell	Interplay	Action Adventure
Scorpion King	Vivendi	Action Adventure
Star Wars: Bounty Hunter	Electronic Arts	Shooter
Star Wars: Clone Wars	Electronic Arts	Action
Star Wars: Jedi Knight 2	Activision	Shooter
Superman: Shadow of Apokolips	Infogrames	Action Adventure
Taz Wanted	Infogrames	Platformer
The Getaway	Sony	Action Adventure
The Sims	Electronic Arts	Strategy
Tomb Raider: Angel of Darkness	Infogrames	Action Adventure
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4	Activision	Sports
Total Immersion Racing	Vivendi	Racing
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger	Electronic Arts	Platformer
World Rally Championship 2	Sony	Racing
Wreckless	Activision	Racing
WWE Smackdown! Shut Your Mouth	THQ	Fighting
X-Men: Next Dimension	Activision	Fighting
<b>DECEMBER</b>		
Alex Ferguson's Player Manager	Ubisoft	Sports
Auto Modellista	THQ	Racing
Gladiator Wrestling	Electronic Arts	Sports
Kingdom Hearts	Sony	Action RPG
Malice	Vivendi	Platformer
Primal	Sony	Action Adventure
Simpsons Skateboarding	Electronic Arts	Sports
Spyral: Enter the Dragonfly	Vivendi	Platformer

**DIRECT HIT!**  
LOTR: FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING  
Distributor: Vivendi  
Type: Action Adventure



The second of the two upcoming Tolkien tie-ins, albeit the one based on the first book in the series, *Fellowship* promises a melange of action (there's lots of fighting and sneaking), adventure (there's a bit of talking and questing), and role-playing (thanks to character stats and upgrades). Expect a chunky sized feature, comparable to our *Two Towers* exclusive last month, to reveal all next issue.



**DIRECT HIT!**  
LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS  
Distributor: Electronic Arts  
Type: Action



The first of the two upcoming Tolkien tie-ins, albeit the one based on the second film in the series (with a bit of the first thrown in for good measure), *The Two Towers* promises a melange of action (there's lots of fighting), action (the fighting again), and more action (thanks to yet more fighting). These two games may look identical, but they're miles apart in gameplay terms.



**inform**

The Official Australian Games Chart

Compiled by Inform in association with IEAA

W/E 15 Sep 2002

TOP 20

Best Selling Full Price PlayStation2 Games (over \$50)

1	◆	V8 Supercars	Racing
2	◆	Medal Of Honor: Frontline	Action
3	◆	Grand Theft Auto 3	Adventure
4	●	Stuntman	Simulator
5	▼	Turok Evolution	Action
6	▼	Gran Turismo 2002 Concept	Racing
7	▼	Final Fantasy X	RPG
8	▼	Spider-Man: The Movie	Adventure
9	▼	V-Rally 3	Racing
10	▼	Vampire Night	Action
11	▲	Smash Court Tennis Pro Tournament	Sports
12	▼	Metal Gear Solid 2	Adventure
13	●	AFL Live 2003	Sports
14	●	UFC Throwdown	Action
15	▼	Scooby Doo: Night 100 Frights	Adventure
16	◆	Crash Band 5: Wrath Of Cortex	Adventure
17	▲	Cricket 2002	Sports
18	▼	Adrenalin Triple Pack 2	Compilation
19	●	Project Zero	Adventure
20	●	Bond 007 Agent Under Fire	Action

◆ New Entry ◆ Non Mover ▲ Up from last week ▼ Down from last week

Charts can be viewed at  
[www.informbd.com.au](http://www.informbd.com.au) as part of



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# STUFF

YOU CAN'T BEAT THE MACHINES. ESPECIALLY THE ONES WITH TWICE THE MEMORY.

1

## CREATIVE MUVO

The latest in Creative's Nomad range, the MuVo (with pointless capital V!) is one of the tiniest mp3 players we've got our delicate hands on. The memory unclips from the main unit and can be plugged into a USB port on your PC for uploading new tracks. Neat.

2

## RICOH CAPLIO RR30

The world's fastest digital camera (at least, in its class of those with a resolution of 4 megapixels or less), the Caplio is perfect for capturing those split-second instants. Like David's face when we tell him office soccer is about to commence.

3

## CREATIVE WEBCAM PRO

The Webcam Pro is your low cost video conferencing or video capturing solution, according to Creative. Its odd mounted eye-ball appearance is decidedly unnerving, but is sure to be a hit with the girls during those quiet, intimate moments.

4

## COMPACT CHAR-G

Measuring just 7cm in length and drawing grunt from mobile phone vibrator motors, the new miniature Compact Char-G is perfect for lunch-break race meets on the boardroom table. Current models are based on Japanese production and JGTC racers, but a special Auto Modellista set is due out soon.





**5**  
**PANASONIC KX-HCM270**  
A wireless, network-ready camera. Wireless. No cables, no incriminating leads. Just think of the possibilities for potential privacy invasions! Your excuse for owning one: home security. Now you can be always watching.

**6**  
**FFX FIGURINE**  
So you've finally finished *Final Fantasy X*, but feel your life is incomplete without the company of Tidus, Yuna, et al? These limited edition figures could be the answer. Standing an impressive 45cm tall, Kimahri is the latest in the range to be released.

**7**  
**REALITY GP COCKPIT**  
If the Dual Shock fails to provide an authentic driving experience, and your new steering wheel only comes halfway there, then perhaps you need this obscenely extravagant cockpit. Simply mount your wheel on the dash, slide in and away you go. You'd have to nuts though.

**8**  
**FIGHTING FANTASY**  
We're not ashamed to admit the heady nostalgia trip these reissued "interactive novels" provided when they arrived in the office. Two dice and a slice of Luck is all that's needed to feel like you're 12 years old again.



PSW DELIVERS: ■ THE BIGGEST PS2 GAMES FIRST – GUARANTEED ■ RAZOR-SHARP, TOP QUALITY FOOTAGE ■ MOVIES, MULTI-ANGLE AND PROFESSIONAL COMMENTARY – NO OTHER DISC HAS THESE!  
 PSW DOES NOT: ■ MISLEAD YOU WITH FAKE EXCLUSIVES ■ USE PC AND XBOX GAME CLIPS – SHAMEFUL ■ MAKE YOU WATCH OUR UGLY FACES ■ WE DON'T SUCK UP TO ANYONE!

# ON THE DVD



## WELCOME

/ GRAHAM SMITH DISC EDITOR

Majestic... flawless... such a strong jaw! Such a confident, unblinking gaze! So the Marquis de Sade opined of my visage upon our meeting this week.

My work on the time machine now finished, I've returned to bring you this massive panorama of game-film-o-vision, packed with exclusive images and little beeping sounds (some say like those of Sputnik, the historic satellite launched from the Motherland all those years ago. Lenin thought they did, when I talked to him in Red Square).

A few have written to lament my game playing abilities – not the footage, which is beyond reproach – and to you we can only say well f\*!£&\$ \*@£\$ \$\*\*£&\* \$ff. Think you can do better? Well, that's great for you, but I really don't care. Well, maybe a little bit. And as I lounge here in April 2003, all my work done, I smile. You should see next month's disc...



## ● WRC2 EXTREME IT'S IN THE PREVIEW SECTION

It's fortunate the DVD format can hold such a vast amount of data, or we'd never be able to fit all the rally games on. *McRae* last month, *WRC2* this month... it's almost like you don't want to drive cars with any grip.

And despite Sony's sequel to its pretty but slightly disappointing

original lurking here in the previews section, it's actually exclusive footage to *PSW* – you're welcome – and could have gone in that section. Don't think we're pointing fingers, but it was the work experience boy that did it.

Perhaps we should have fed him after all. We thought he was lying about the

faintness in the hope we'd loosen his chains a little.

Anyway, make sure you check out the drama as rallying is *really* shaping up for a fight: Colin's not going to have it all his own way, not this time. And we wouldn't want poor 15-year-old Kevin to have died in vain either.



## ● LORD OF THE RINGS

IT'S IN THE STOP PRESS SECTION

Some magazines would only bring you one *Lord of the Rings* game, but that's just sheer laziness. We thought we'd give you footage of not five, not none but TWO. One for each tower, as it were, which it were. Was. Is.

Firstly, we've got brand new high-res footage of Electronic Arts' highly impressive *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*, the game that dazzled everybody so at this year's Los Angeles E3 trade show. Just to clarify, this is the game officially licensed from Peter Jackson's movies, and as such has many of the most famous characters and locations.

Secondly, though not necessarily second in merit, of course, for those of you who are lawyers or insane fans of Vivendi Universal Interactive, we've got *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*. Just to clarify, this is licensed from JRR Tolkien's original books, and as such has many of the most famous characters and locations. How different can the two games be? Who's creating the most authentic wizarding? Take a look!



## ● THE GETAWAY

IT'S IN THE EXCLUSIVE SECTION

*The Getaway* looks like not being quite as godawful as we were beginning to fear. Bad? Huh? 1) It's been ages coming, 2) it's out soon but *still* not finished, 3) *GTA3* convincingly pissed out its territory in *Getaway's* back yard, and 4) keeping up with the Vinnie Jones's isn't cool any more. Nevertheless, poking Cutlack with a spangly stick upon his return from playing it elicited some real enthusiasm. Optimism! Yay! See why!



## ● SOUL CALIBUR 2

IT'S IN THE EXCLUSIVE SECTION

"I want to fight" he said, "How much?" I said, "More than you could ever know" he said, "No way" I said, "Too late" he said, "Fare thee well" I said, "Can't go" he said, "Why not?" I said, "We're in a small but beautifully created arena facing off with gargantuan weapons in the sequel to one of the smoothest, most detailed and in-depth fighting games ever made, and I want to cut me some" he said. I greatly fear my money is not safe.

**EXCLUSIVE:** The Getaway, Red Faction 2, Soul Calibur II, Burnout 2, Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance, Zone Of The Enders 2, Summoner 2, TimeSplitters 2, Hitman 2

**STOP PRESS:** James Bond 007 in... Nightfire, LOTR: The Two Towers and The Fellowship of the Ring

**NEWS:** Big Mutha Truckers, Madden 2003, ATV2, Ninja Assault, Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer, Way of the Samurai, Legaia

**PREVIEWS:** Blade 2, Twin Caliber, Street Hoops, Dave Mirra BMX XXX, Crashed, Ghost Recon, The Sum Of All Fears, Colin McRae Rally 3, WRC2 Extreme, Turok Evolution

**REVIEWS:** NFS: Hot Pursuit 2, Project Zero, Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX 2, MX Superfly, Legion, Ferrari F355 Challenge, Onimusha 2, The Thing



# WIN!

## the art of summoner

Are videogames really art? Do they inform our collective knowledge and shape our view of the world? Do they enable us to further our understanding of the human condition? Or are they just another mindless form of entertainment with which we frivolously waste away our lives? And, hey, what is art anyway? It's a bit of a moot point maybe, since we're here to discuss the art of a videogame, in this case *Summoner 2*.

While she's not informing us all about new games, the gorgeous Estelle from THQ is actually a bit of an artist. In her spare time, she put brush to canvas and whipped up these lovely fantasy prints in order to promote Volition's imminent roleplaying sequel, *Summoner 2*. To be honest, that's a lie - we think someone from Volition was probably responsible for the art. Nonetheless, PSW thought they looked so good we'd have to demand three of them to give away to our readers. Not only that, but each winner will also receive a copy of *Summoner 2* in case they get bored of stroking their chin in front of the print and, you know, want to play something instead.

So, after that rather forced and long-winded tale, you no doubt want us to shut and tell you how to win. Here's how:



### BACK OF AN ENVELOPE, PLEASE!

**Q.** Who were the ancient sect of necromancers in Summoner mythology?

Send your entry to:  
Is this art?  
PSW  
78 Renwick St  
Redfern NSW 2016  
Australia



SUMMONER

### COMPETITION WINNERS

#### PSW#3

##### LETHAL SKIES

Charles Chien, Lower Templestone VIC  
Doug Burrows, Terranora NSW  
Jan McLeod, Milgrange VIC  
Liam Carroll, Croydon VIC  
Mark Dasilva, Alexandra Hills QLD  
Norman McLeod, Wandin North VIC  
Phil Wild, Wanniassa ACT  
Sarah Kennedy, Seville East VIC  
Shelly Stevens, Croydon VIC  
Thomas Reay, Croydon VIC



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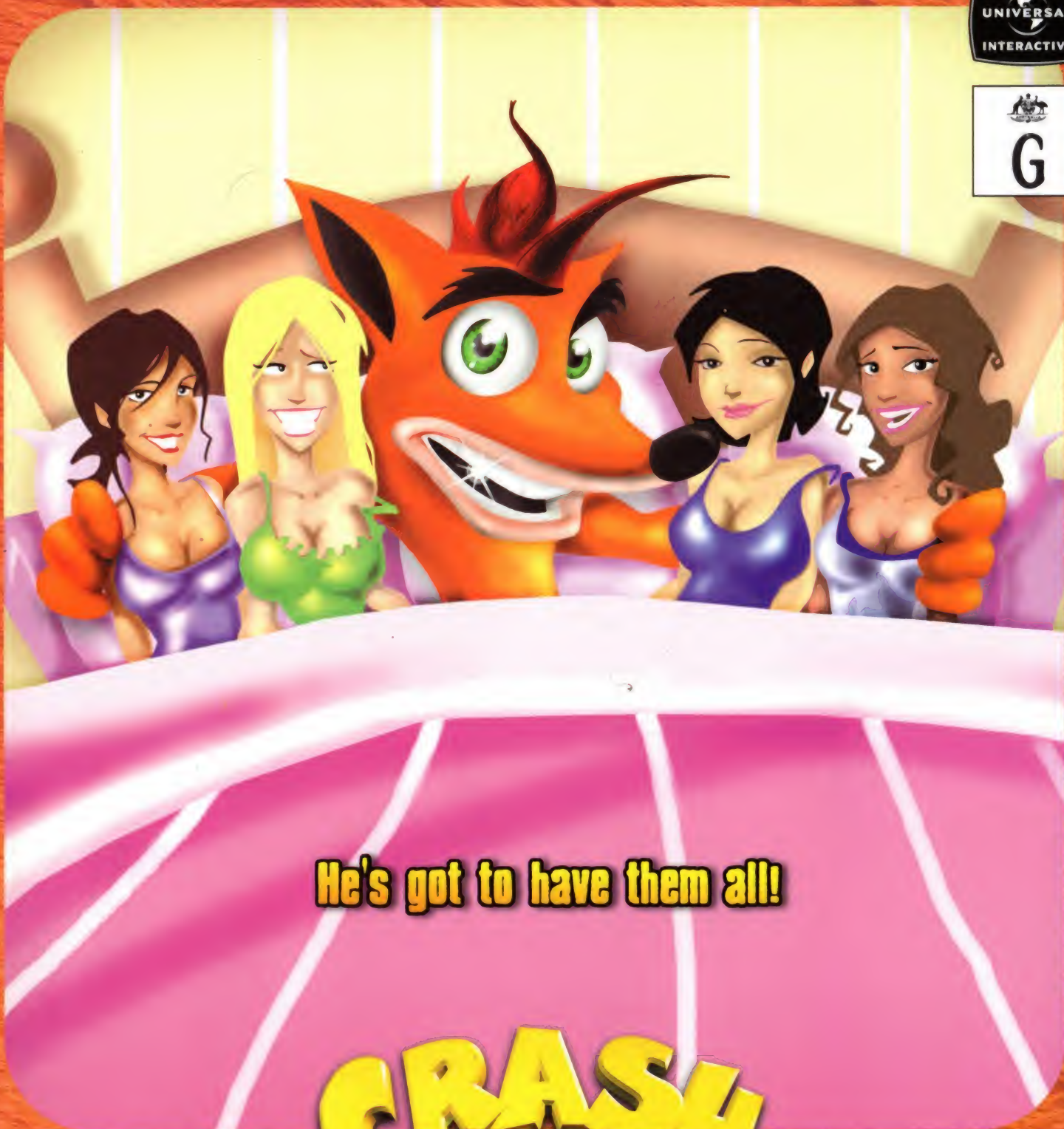
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